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Semantics and Politics William K. Tabb

THE REAL HOME STRATEGY

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LETTERS

Berry, Nate Shaw and Gorki

Omaha, Neb.

As an avid reader of *The Nation* for more than a half century, I found that reading and rereading Wendell Berry's appraisal of Nate Shaw [Mar. 1] was as intriguing, profound and challenging as the finest book reviews I have read in *The Nation* all these decades. His review of the book immediately reminded me of . . . Maxim Gorki's "The Wisdom of the Illiterate," an article I read someplace years and years ago. . . .

Harry G. Mendelson

cut the loss

Miami, Fla.

Far too much time, effort and newsprint have been wasted debating the pros and cons of promoting and supporting the corrupt military dictatorship of South Vietnam. I think we have much better ways to spend our energy and resources. Let's forget the whole sorry mess and pull out now—lock, stock and barrel!

Reynolds Moody, Lieut. Col. USMC (Ret.)

divided being

The following is excerpted from a letter from Laura (Riding) Jackson in response to a review by Judith Thurman of Miss Riding's Selected Poems: In Five Sets [The Nation, *Nov. 30, 1974*]:

Wabasso, Fla.

. . . That the characterization "feminist" alters the sense of my thought on the nature of woman-identity and woman-functionality I cannot here go into. But I can point to a few misrenderings of text. . . . Miss Thurman has me saying that both men *and women* have reached "the half-point, the finality of divided being. . . ." What I say in the passage from which she quotes those words is: "No further can go the man-minds. They have reached the half-point, the finality of divided being. . . ." She has me asking women to "forego the imbecile/Theology of loveliness." The lines from which she quotes read (they come in relation to a consideration of what the consequence would be if women were to "unwrap their lady-swaddlings" and "shed the timorous scales of nakedness," and are addressed to *men*, individualized as "*man*"):

It were a loathsome spectacle, you think?
Eventual entrails of deity
Worshipful eye offending?
It were the sign, man
To pluck the loathsome eye,
Forswear the imbecile
Theology of loveliness,
Felling the patriarchal leer
. . . . . .

In another rendering of a poem-text I am described as having said that women had been

Kept safe from flagrant realness
The forgeries of ourselves we were. . . .

This does not make sense. What I say in the poem is that there is, for women to despoil, a masquerade "Where gloom of silk and gold/And glossy dazed adornments/Kept safe. . . ."

Further, I can only suggest that some other ascriptions made in the review, both particular and general, reflect more the reviewer's critical and other predispositions than the discussed subject. They, and those I have cited, have stood out to me as they would not have in a review of a predominantly unsympathetic and careless sort. But because the review is not that, readers will have been the more likely to pay heed to them.

EDITORIALS

Distress Signals

Republicans of all factions have cause to be worried —only 18 per cent of the electorate now identifies with the party—and they are freely voicing their concerns. Recently twenty-eight leaders of the conservative wing met for the purpose of putting President Ford on notice of their unhappiness with him and his Vice President. No resolutions were adopted but a committee, to be headed by Sen. James Buckley, was set up for the purpose of badgering the Administration into paying the party's right wing more attention. Then the Young Republicans—there still are some—staged a leadership conference at which Sen. William Brock, up for re-election next year, told the delegates that the party is without "purpose or philosophy" and that voters associate it with Watergate, big business and hard times. "If you ask me what the Republican Party stands for today," he said, "I'd have to say I honestly don't know." This prompted Sen. Charles Percy to lament that the party is not addressing the basic social and economic needs of the nation. At this point, the bitter dispute over the Vice President's ruling on the filibuster issue sent Sen. John Tower on a dogtrot to the White House with a formal warning of conservative disaffection and drew from Senator Goldwater the not surprising comment that the conservatives "hate Rockefeller's guts." Yet despite their unhappiness and frustration, Goldwater warned the conservatives that a third-party bolt would "practically insure the destruction" of the GOP and that they should continue to work "within the system."

These swift-paced events set the stage, so to speak, for the confrontation—of a sort—that occurred when President Ford, Vice President Rockefeller and Ronald Reagan appeared before 2,700 state and local party leaders in Washington. The President praised Rockefeller, advocated an "open door" party and made it clear that he was not, at the moment, willing to appease the right wing now organized in two groups: the Committee on Conservative Alternatives, headed by Senator Helms, and the Buckley committee set up to keep an eye on the President. What, if anything, does all this sound and fury signify?

Patently the Republicans are suffering from a crisis of identity that has grown steadily more acute. One phase of the problem was suggested when, in the political equivalent of a Freudian slip, *The New York Times* recently identified Senator Javits as a Democrat. It is indeed difficult, on issues or ideology, to distinguish liberal Republicans from their Democratic colleagues in the Senate. The right-wing conservatives are distinguishable from both, but are victims of a passion for hard-line rhetoric which, as in the case of Ronald Reagan, is about all that is needed to cadge conservative votes nowadays. If a politician talks tough, the right wing cheers, but two can play that game. In California, Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr. is stealing conservative thunder by such measures as a decree that public servants must henceforth purchase their own attaché cases (at a saving to the state of

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$153,000 annually). He returns unsolicited gifts and has dispensed with fancy two-color official stationery for the Governor's office. These symbolic acts, announced in appropriate rhetoric, have had a soothing effect on conservative psyches.

What 'Broad Spectrum'?

The Republican problem has several dimensions. On the one hand, the Ford-Rockefeller conception of the two-party system is out of date. Rockefeller has said that each party should, within itself, represent a "broad spectrum." He sees parties simply as coalitions broadly enough designed to win elections; neither party should, in this view, have an ideological content. But what he actually means is that the GOP should represent a "broad spectrum" of those who have it made, while the Democrats should represent a "broad spectrum" of those who haven't yet, or never will, make it. In the memory of living man, the Republican Party has always represented the better groomed, better paid types—and, of course, the interests of big business. It has been predominantly a party of, by, and for Wasps. In the past, if it has attracted fewer Southerners and Catholics than the Democratic Party, it is because these groupings have been relatively slow in developing the indicated characteristics.

But today this "natural constituency" has narrowed and, acting like the minority it is, its views have grown more rigid. As James Dickerson points out in the Washington *Star*, the GOP today is increasingly an atypical, homogeneous, affluent group. The people know this. Poll responses indicate that voters think of the Republicans as the party of big business, the rich and the powerful. The same polls show that the party makes its strongest showing among people with $35,000 or more in annual income—nearly twice their percentage in the population as a whole. One observer at the Washington meeting said to Dickerson: "These committee members are upper-middle class and *have been for some time*. They are not upwardly mobile like most of the population, which is one reason why they distrust people like George Romney" [italics added]. At the meeting in Washington there were few blacks, no poor whites, few factory workers or Chicanos, few young people and few, as Dickerson puts it, whose names end in vowels.

The Republican Party has been like this for a long time, but today it is much more monolithic than in the past, and this narrow uniformity is beginning to make it act not only more like a minority party, but, again as Dickerson puts it, like "a minor party." Most of the Republican officials represented at the Washington gathering detest "troublemakers"; they want things run smoothly —by them—and they do not want their control challenged. That is why Reagan invariably gets the loudest hand at Republican rallies: his bully-boy line, empty of content, is precisely what they want to hear.

The program of the right-wing conversatives is even less related to pressing social and economic needs than is that of other Republicans. It differs sharply from traditional Republican conservatism, which tended to be isolationist. The right wing wants ever larger military

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budgets, which contribute to inflation, corrupt sound management practices and distort the economy. It opposes détente, although that might mean more business (which we could use at the moment). They dislike Kissinger because he is a Jew and, more to the point, a protégé of Nelson Rockefeller. They want to "fight communism" globally, since they oppose any form of social change; their prime objective is to hang on to what they have and add to it if possible. Yet they lack the wit to understand that a rigid "anti-communism" breeds a host of problems for which their program has no solutions. When some of the fervor behind "anti-communism" abated, they opted for "social issues" which could be agitated to much the same effect. On the domestic scene, they stress harsh law-and-order tactics and advocate capital punishment. Such a program is not "the wave of the future." The polls show that those who call themselves "conservatives" do so largely in terms of the social issues; on economic issues they take a different stance. True, the "welfare liberalism" of the Democrats is also largely irrelevant, but the rhetoric is more palatable and they appeal to a much broader spectrum.

So what, then, is likely to happen to the Republican Party? The right-wing position is strong enough to command a degree of patronage and a limited veto power on certain issues which political spokesmen for the right do not want to abandon. These politicians are also well aware of the history of third-party movements and they know how difficult it is to deny an incumbent President renomination. So if Ford seeks the nomination, the right-wing elements will probably sulk but not bolt. Should he decide not to run, then they will mount an all-out drive to capture control of the party. It is also possible that a combination of circumstances might drive them toward the third-party option, in which case we might well see a replay, in reverse, of the 1948 election. The Henry Wallace movement was a godsend for Truman, since it drew from him the brunt of the redbaiting in that campaign. A third party of the Right that campaigned to abolish Social Security might make Gerald Ford seem like a liberal Keynesian.

This consideration has no doubt occurred to the President and his advisers. But the problem for Ford and Rockefeller and their associates is that the nation is being polarized to a degree that makes it difficult for middle-of-the-road Grand Rapids types to "broaden the base" of a party made up of officials who do not want it broadened because they do not like all those people who, if invited in, might be impolite and, eventually, want to take over. In today's context, a party of the Right needs more than a charismatic leader and hard-line rhetoric; it needs to project an authoritarian program, not a mishmash of frontier pieties. A party with such a program could perhaps be "the wave of the future," but the right-wing Republicans represent a combination of selfishness, nostalgia and snobbishness, rich in dogmas, bereft of ideas. Neither faction, therefore, would, alone or in combination, seem able to "broaden the spectrum" to compete with the Democrats. If the right wing were to bolt, however, that might give the moderates, i.e., the more rational conservatives, a chance to restructure the GOP and make it a major party once again.

Buying the News

Television news, in its day-to-day coverage still too much the spectacle-oriented tabloid, may become even more of a circus now that CBS has paid a reported $25,000 for the rights to the H. R. Haldeman story.

Haldeman pocketed the money for submitting to a mere five-and-a-half hours of filmed interview by Mike Wallace and for making available to the network some of his home movies of the Nixon era, all of which will be edited down to an hour or two for broadcast. The convicted Watergate conspirator can't be blamed for soliciting and taking the money. He will be but the most recent of a small string of new sensations paraded on the tube for a fee. Like his underling, G. Gordon Liddy, he was paid by CBS to give viewers the chance to see Wallace, one of TV's roughest of interviewers, interrogate him. Liddy was paid a reported $15,000 and Haldeman no doubt reasonably believed he was a more valuable property.

CBS has no business paying for news and makes no positive contribution by further blurring the distinction between journalism and show business. The network claims that payment for this interview—like the earlier Liddy and Alexander Solzhenitsyn exclusives and a program with Lyndon Johnson after he left office—is consistent with CBS policy because it offers memoir and not current news. What that means is that the purpose of the interview is something other than eliciting information.

Both ABC and NBC executives were quick to denounce the CBS payoff, but their past records indicate similar perceptions and policies. According to *Newsweek*, NBC paid $17,500 in 1969 for Sirhan Sirhan and ABC in January bought a conversation with former Lieut. William Calley for broadcast on its *AM America* program.

Purchases like these may add to the public's store of information, but over time they may also vulgarize the process of getting and spreading the news and actually constrict its flow. If your story can be bought, why tell it for free? Similarly, investments in information could lead to the kind of show-biz hype that has been a bane to much of British journalism. And what if an expensive story doesn't pan out? Will it be overplayed to avoid total loss of the initial investment? Will the sources themselves play up their stories to gain higher prices? Will the people interviewed become partners in the packaging of their news, distorting it to fit commercial considerations? Will less affluent journalistic concerns be frozen out on some stories?

Time reports that Richard Salant, president of CBS News, admits he "may have slipped" in authorizing payment for the Haldeman interview and says he's going to reexamine the network policy that supposedly allowed the purchase. If the Haldeman flap causes all three networks to formulate firm bans on such payoffs, it will have been worth more than the $25,000 to the viewing public. If not, and the purchases continue and spread, the Federal Communications Commission should consider requiring broadcasters to give notice when they've paid for a story. A warning like that would put viewers on notice that they are watching a show. And it might also embarrass the corporate journalists involved into doing some real reporting.

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Frame-up Dropped

We were glad to learn last week that conspiracy charges against two *Indianapolis Star* reporters, Richard E. Cady and William E. Anderson, have been dropped. The pair, part of a three-man investigative unit that exposed widespread corruption involving Indianapolis police, had been charged with conspiring to bribe a police officer. Cady himself gave *Nation* readers the background for these charges —and the story behind the corruption story. [See "The *Star* Against the Cops," November 23, 1974.]

It took two grand jury hearings before Cady and Anderson were indicted last September. Both refused to identify their sources. Two months later, after failing to pursue vigorously the *Star*'s corruption charges, Indianapolis Mayor Richard Lugar was defeated by Democrat Birch Bayh in a U.S. Senate race and Marion County Prosecutor Noble Pearcy was turned out by Democrat James F. Kelley. After dismissing the charges against the reporters, Kelley said: "I believe they [the grand jurors] were either mistaken or misled." Anderson, speaking for the reporting team, said he hoped a new grand jury would look into why the reporters had been indicted in the first place.

Reporters have been framed before by police whose corruption they were investigating; corrupt police know how to arrange such matters. And though the charges rarely stick, the arrests can at least temporarily confuse the public—as Pearcy tried to do—and put courageous papers, like the *Star*, to sometimes burdensome expense.

In this case the *Star* not only financed the long initial corruption probe but also backed the reporters from the moment they were arrested, charging that the grand jury action was "a clumsy effort to undermine the credibility of the investigating team and of a series of articles about police corruption and its cover-up by the prosecutor's office." Now, after the indictments have been dropped, the *Star* asks: "Who was responsible? Was the grand jury manipulated by the former prosecutor?" Let's hope the answers are forthcoming. In the meantime, the paper and its reporters merit praise—and emulation.

Return to Sender

One of the biggest con jobs of the Nixon administration was its persuasion of Congress and the American people that postal service could be improved by transforming the U.S. Post Office into a quasi-public corporation. With a heavy dose of apple pie rhetoric, Nixon and his agents promised that the change would end political patronage, traditionally the province of the Post Office. And bureaucratic inefficiency and sluggishness was to be replaced by the supposed hard-nosed dynamism of corporate management. Nixon got what he wanted—and postal service has deteriorated, and become more costly, ever since.

Politicians in search of an issue have here one ready-made. The quality of the nation's postal service affects every citizen, every business, every area of the country. Yet, except for Jack Anderson, who time after time has exposed the self-serving administration of former Postmaster General E.T. Klassen, the matter seems to have aroused much carping but little analysis or action.

There are some, including Ralph Nader, who say the Nixon regime wanted to wreck the Post Office so that the administration could get away with apportioning some of its duties to private outfits. That's plausible, as is the contention that the ruination of the Post Office was just another in a long series of conservative attempts to discredit the notion of public administration of public services. In any case, service has declined to the point that commercial organizations are now engaged in various aspects of mail and package delivery. Outright abandonment by the postal service of those functions would lead to private monopolies and stiff price increases.

There seems to be no solid indication that service under the quasi-public corporation will improve. Already, perhaps at the behest of big business, which is sometimes stuck for postage due on bills, the postal service has announced that it will no longer deliver unstamped mail, and will either return it to the sender or, when that's not possible, transfer it to the dead letter office. The irrationality of this move has been described by Rep. Robert Lagomarsino, a California Republican. He notes that the new policy could end up costing the postal service quite a bit. Not only will the service be stuck with the cost of returns and intra-system transfers but anyone wishing to mail a letter free need only write the addressee's name as the return address on an unstamped envelope. Petty avoidance of stamps might be a minor nuisance, but the loophole indicates the lack of sensible planning in the postal service. Meanwhile, *Advertising Age* reports that the service is considering delivering ultra-junk mail—advertisements distributed en masse without individual addresses. With important deliveries becoming even slower and more unreliable, this additional burden would be, at the least, unreasonable. Others predict stiff postal rate increases in the near future.

A government that can't provide essential postal service efficiently and at low cost is failing its citizens in a basic, deleterious way. Rep. Eligio de la Garza, a Texas Democrat critical of the initial change in the U.S. Post Office, suggests that the experiment in corporate management of the mail be abandoned and that the agency be returned to direct executive administration. Then, at least, if the public is irritated by its mail service, it can complain at the polling booth.

Fill Up the Tank

Citizens who have listened carefully to the President's dry monotones on the energy crisis and his program for coping with it must have been surprised if they were tuned to the CBS evening news for March 5. Gasoline filling-station operators, according to CBS, are being pressured by the big oil companies to increase sales, not by cutting prices but by staying open longer hours and doing whatever else may be necessary to sell more gas and oil. At the same time the public now learns that oil tankers are tied up wherever their owners can find mooring; that oil storage tanks all over the world are brimming; and that some tankers at sea are moving at half-speed, thus serving as floating storage facilities (Joseph C. Harsch, *Christian Science Monitor).* All this suggests that Ford is badly briefed or that the facts have

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suddenly changed or that his insistence on a tariff on oil imports has a thrust that is not widely understood.

In 1973 the OPEC nations had no reliable information on the precise correlation between price and demand, so they decided to stabilize production at that year's levels. Similarly, they did not anticipate the rate of inflation, or the effect of oil conservation measures taken by the consuming nations, or, least of all, the extent of the current worldwide recession-depression. So the OPEC nations are now urging the big oil companies to help them dispose of a "surplus"—in market terms—by selling more gas and oil. The big companies are glad to oblige, as long as prices are not cut; hence the current pressure on the dealers. At the same time, there is a surfeit of tankers, particularly of the largest variety, so that it is now possible to ship oil from Persian Gulf ports around South Africa to a port such as Rotterdam at freight rates less than it costs to ship oil from Libya.

So suddenly has the situation changed that the Administration has not been able to come up with new semantic gimmicks (see article p. 329 this issue) which would attempt to explain the contradiction between what it is saying and the observed facts. But it probably would not adjust its game plan in any case. This plan is dictated by the big oil companies, which are interested in the sale of the refined products. An oil tariff is therefore to their advantage, since it raises the base on which they set their percentage profit. The alternative Democratic program is mostly influenced by the large independent producers of crude, who are not primarily concerned about retail prices but want to minimize the competition from foreign crude. The programs differ in the means of accomplishing what are, in effect, common objectives. But both of them are at fault in that it should be in the national interest to import as much oil as possible, if only to conserve domestic reserves. This also implies, of course, the need for strong domestic conservation measures. Until recently the Interior Department was referring rather glibly to proven domestic reserves sufficient to last forty to sixty years, but more recent studies indicate that twenty-five years is a safer forecast. The danger is that the public, seeing the contradiction between the observed facts and official pronouncements, will conclude that the problem is fictitious and start filling up the tanks.

WELFARE CAPITALISM

DENMARK'S PREDICAMENT

BRIAN PATRICK McGUIRE

Copenhagen

Ever since the eccentric miracle lawyer and tax evader Mogens Glistrup brought his Progressive Party into parliament with twenty-eight seats in 1973, articles about Denmark have been appearing regularly in foreign publications as influential and ideological as *Time* and *Pravda*. A journalist from the *Los Angeles Times*, asked by a Danish state television interviewer why twice as many reporters showed up for the 1975 election as for the one in 1973, mentioned growing interdependence among nations. He might have added that the more uncertain Americans become about the virtues and flexibility of their own liberal capitalistic system, the more they will look for the virtues—and failings—of other political and social models.

Little more than one merciless year, December 4, 1973 to January 9, 1975, separates the last two Danish elections; but much has changed in that time. The 1973 elections showed how far Danes had lost faith in their welfare system and how willing they were to vote for demagogues who promised instant solutions. The 1975 election also revealed a complex search for immediate answers, but many of the problems are now completely different. A year ago firms could hardly keep up with their orders; today, many are closing, or laying off half their employees, or putting them on three-day weeks. A year ago unemployment was an almost forgotten word; now it is above 13 per cent, the highest in Europe and climbing every week. Even Henry Kissinger seems to be aware of these problems. The Danish radio reports that Marvin Kalb of CBS News, one of Kissinger's oldest friends, has said that the Secretary of State especially fears the imminent collapse of three European countries; Italy, Great Britain and Denmark.

In the midst of growing unemployment during 1974, two other essential factors grew worse: a riotous inflation at a 20 per cent level and the total inability of politicians to form a viable majority coalition in parliament. These factors combine to undermine what was once, except perhaps in Sweden, Europe's most stable social democracy. Unless the world economic situation greatly improves in the coming year, and that is not likely, Denmark's problems will continue to grow.

Consequently Danes are turning in on themselves, either toward isolation from social problems, or in attempts to understand and cope with this unhappy new world. Some of the responses aim to salvage the best and most humane aspects of the old political and social system, but they are approaching economic dilemmas in untraditional ways. Denmark may well produce a few much-needed answers to the general predicament of welfare capitalism.

Denmark is worth looking at not only because things

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have gone so far here but also because in a country of 5 million people they are more concentrated. A high level of general education, a one-channel television of outstanding quality and newspapers still numerous enough to reflect the entire political spectrum—all these make Denmark a country where social changes can be immediately noticed and debated by interested observers. The level of discussion is high, and even the left-wing student groups who complain that the media suppress minority opinions have a much better chance of being heard here than they would have in Britain or the United States.

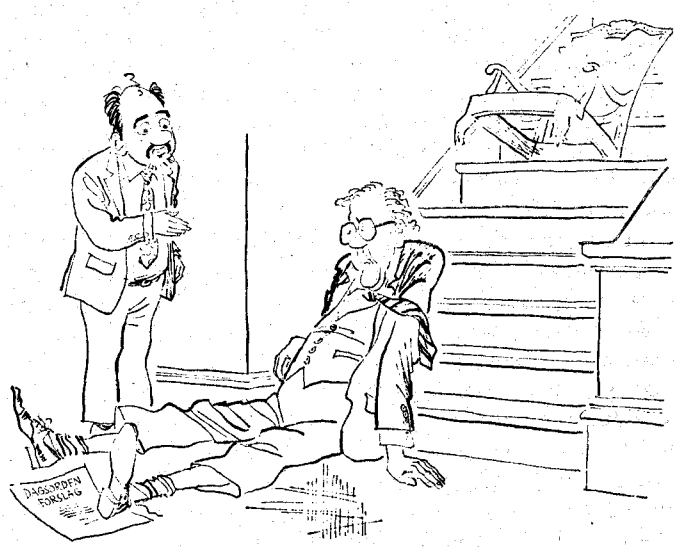
This public colloquy results from a constant examination of conscience on the basis of sophisticated models for human and social behavior. Danes are forever demanding to know where they went wrong. Sometimes this introspection can seem provincial, but until last autumn at least, it was a healthy sign that apathy had not yet set in. In 1974, for example, a series of television programs, "What about Culture?" went out to factories, prisons and parish churches to talk to nonexperts about the nation's problems. In one memorable discussion, printers working for a large Copenhagen newspaper confronted union bigwigs (pamperers, they are called here) to criticize the role of the Social Democratic Party and its claim to have monopoly knowledge about workers' needs. Such meetings can easily become superficial exchanges of gripes, but when there is a good interviewer and sufficient time (because of viewers' complaints, the programs were extended from thirty to fifty minutes), the problems touched upon can lead to follow-up sessions on radio, articles in the press and, most important, further discussion at lunchtime in factories and offices.

The central role of television in binding Denmark together and presenting conflicts and injustices can best be seen in its transmission of plays by Leif Panduro. Almost unknown outside Scandinavia, Panduro has become in the last decade the bard of the Danish mentality. In some ways he resembles Harold Pinter in the threatening undertones of his dialogue, but that Panduro is much less academic and elitist than the subtle Pinter can be seen in surveys made after his plays are shown. More than 2 million Danes watch them, and they come from every group in society. Unskilled workers are proportionately as numerous as top civil servants.

Panduro gave Denmark two plays at the beginning of 1975: *Anne and Paul* and *Bertram and Lisa.* Both deal with couples in their 30s who graduated from college in the wealthy 1960s and then obtained stimulating jobs in the public sector. Now they are confronted with emotional crises. Both Paul and Bertram end by compromising themselves, either for power or for love. The mechanisms of Danish democracy and justice are totally inadequate to discipline their ambitions and reactions. Panduro shows in his usual blockbusting way that Danes, who pride themselves on their calm reasonability, are beneath the surface as primitive and ungovernable as any barbarian horde.

But just as Danes have a remarkable ability to zero in on their problems, so too they are more exposed to the rest of the world's problems than any other European nation. Therefore, the Danish economy is extremely volatile, as shown by the fact that from January 1974 to January 1975 unemployment increased by 350 per cent. When the oil blockade and the subsequent huge jump in prices hit Europe in the fall of 1973, Danes awoke to the fact that they were almost completely dependent on oil—Denmark has no coal or any other energy source, and 90 per cent of its energy is produced with imported oil. But that is only part of the difficulty. Even without the increased prices on oil and other raw materials, Denmark would still be suffering from the worst inflation in Europe (about 20 per cent last year). With its strong trade unions and the effective central organization that coordinates their negotiations with industry, Denmark has attained the highest wages in Europe for unskilled workers. After the last major settlement in the spring of 1973, the minimum hourly wage jumped from 12 kroner to 19 kroner (a little less than 6 kroner equals $1). Equal pay for women was introduced at the same time. After such gains, the Danish Federation of Employers is calling for a halt to wage increases and has even started an advertising campaign comparing American minimum wages with Danish. This has infuriated the unions, which feel that the comparison suppresses the fact that the cost of living in Denmark and the tax burden, even for the lowest-paid group, are greater than in the United States.

In any case, the Danish worker, skilled or unskilled, earns more per hour than does his Norwegian or Swedish colleague, and that is one reason for the mini-boom the two sister Scandinavian countries are experiencing while Denmark slumps to the bottom of the Common Market. Some observers want to blame the Common Market itself, but their argument is hard to follow. Except for Denmark's economic cooperation with West Germany, the kroner would long since have fallen, perhaps as drastically as the pound, and imports would be more expensive than ever. Such a result would have made the already dangerous balance of payments deficit into a catastrophe.



Bo Bojesen; *Politiken.*

Poul Hartling has been flung from his chair on the first day of the January Parliament. Says Anker Jorgensen, leader of the Social Democrats, "Maybe now we can shake hands."

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Unlike Sweden and Norway, Denmark cannot depend on oil discoveries or heavy industry to give its economy a solid base. The export-import ratio has plagued Denmark for decades, and now with heightened oil prices and expensive Danish goods that cannot be sold on the world market, the figures are worse than ever. And yet in the midst of this frightening crisis, Denmark is practically without a government. The January election clarified nothing and only allowed the mini-minority government of the Liberal Party (Venstre) to continue lamely for a few weeks until it fell on the first vote in the new parliament. There followed hectic weeks of negotiation that led to a reformation of the Liberal government with a few minor parties lending support, but not nearly approaching a parliamentary majority. And this government fell even before parliament convened, for Mogens Glistrup withdrew his sullen support. In one of the nastiest exchanges among politicians ever shown on television of the desolate Danish public, Center and right-of-Center politicians accused Glistrup of lies and deception.

The only alternative finally asserted itself at the end of the second week in February: a minority Social Democratic government under its unpopular leader, Anker Jorgensen, with only fifty-four votes in parliament and no supporting parties to lift him up to the eighty-nine needed for a majority. One politician, who wanted to remain anonymous, believes that this government will be allowed to continue until the present labor negotiations are completed in a month or two. If another election follows, the move toward Glistrup's Progressive Party that started in the summer of 1973 will certainly continue and give this strange and contradictory man a power over the Danish Government and society that no similar figure has ever had. Though the Danes know that Glistrup is a millionaire because of the way he manipulates his tax returns, hundreds of thousands of them trust his ability to save the nation. One man and one party can be blamed for Glistrup's continuing popularity: Poul Hartling and the Liberal Party, who were responsible for calling the January 9th election and are now reaping its bitter harvest.

After the December 1973 election Hartling was the only man willing to assume power. He was unwilling to share his government with other like-minded parties, and so from January to December 1974, Danish political life became a series of crises, with Hartling threatening to call for an election if he did not get sufficient support from other parties for his proposals. Bullying, cajoling and all-night negotiations resulted in four large legislative packages that, in the spring, brought extra taxes on consumer goods and, in the autumn, a tax cut of a magnitude never before carried through in Denmark. Hartling, cynically adopting Glistrup's methods, had given the voters exactly what they had been demanding—on the average, $200 to $500 more a year.

Hartling's tax cut boosted his popularity, and for a while in December 1974, it looked as though the January election would turn into something of a national referendum, backing Hartling's decisiveness, rejecting Glistrup's instant solutions and finally establishing the possibility of a majority government in Denmark. On January 9, Hartling almost doubled his party's seats in parliament, from twenty-four to forty-two but the political situation was basically unchanged, with Glistrup still holding the balance of power. Meanwhile the necessary legislation to pay for the tax cut has not even been introduced in parliament, for the Social Democrats oppose Hartling's social gratuities.

While the political circus continues and Danes become ever more disillusioned with politics, some alternatives that may after a time prove far more important are beginning to appear. This extra-parliamentary reaction is supported by one of the smallest parties in parliament, the Socialist Left, which is trying to encourage workers to deal themselves with the threatening chaos. The most dramatic attempt is called People's Television, a new manufacturing firm being formed at Horsens in Jutland. It intends to take over the closed Rank-Arena factory that produced color TV sets. The decision to stop production at the end of January came from the firm's headquarters in London and created anger in Horsens, which depended heavily on the factory. Feelers for another buyer were then sent out to other countries, but the terms offered to the employees by an interested Finnish company were unsatisfactory. Now the workers themselves are trying to get local people to buy $100 shares in the new company and plan to employ 300 people (about half the old working force). In the first few days after the shares went on sale, individuals, families, unions, other firms and even political parties began to invest in the venture. It will be a long time before it is known whether People's Television is viable, but its initiative is being watched by workers in other firms that threaten to close.

Outside Copenhagen, workers at Uniprint, one of Denmark's largest printers, have been on strike against their employer's decision to sell his machines and move the firm to Norway or Sweden, where he thinks he could pay lower wages. With the help of experts from outside, the workers have proven that the firm is in excellent financial condition. For the few weeks that they were on strike the Uniprint employees were helped by a sympathy action backed by the Communists and the Social Left. The printers' union sought an agreement with Swedish and Norwegian printers' unions that their workers would not accept employment from a transplanted Uniprint.

Such independent attempts by workers and unions to deal with the effects of the economic crisis point to a new era of worker participation in Danish industry. In the 1930s unemployment was accepted as an act of God. One could do nothing except line up for weekly support payments. But now the attitude is that the provision in the Danish constitution of 1953 that guarantees the right of all citizens to have work must be taken seriously. In one way or another, the economic system has to be adjusted to the needs of the human beings it is supposed to serve.

At Uniprint the strike and sympathy actions, together with resulting publicity, finally forced the owner to withdraw his plans for moving. Eighty jobs were thus secured, at least for the next six months, and a precedent has been set, should any other firm contemplate emigration. At the same time, the Social Democratic Party is propos-

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ing "economic democracy," which means that workers would contribute funds for industry. After a few years, such funds would have built up an enormous supply of capital, which could be drawn upon to rescue viable firms in liquidity trouble. However, it would not be the private owners who made the decisions, on the basis of their own pocketbooks, but rather the managers of the funds, who would be union officials and workers. Unfortunately, this idea has met limited enthusiasm outside union circles.

Even if Denmark's problems are beyond its own control because its industries must compete with those of other nations where the capitalist system can function more cynically, there is a growing feeling here that grass-roots notions are superior to political intervention. For many of the 150,000 unemployed Danes, of course, apathy is the predictable response to economic collapse. But even that is being resisted. Workers are registering at "folk high schools" for six-month courses during which they improve their basic skills and live in a creative and stimulating milieu. Arrangements are being made for whole families to live at the high schools, so it is not just young single people who can take advantage of the experience.

A program like that could not be offered if there were not a substantial amount of wealth in the country, and Danes are being constantly reminded that they still live in a very rich nation. They are learning to accept with less bitterness and more understanding the drop in living standards that the next few years promise. Perhaps mostly for selfish reasons, Danes have saved more on electricity, gasoline and heating than have any other people of Europe—about 15 per cent in 1974. Even if the feeling of social solidarity that characterized the years of the German occupation has not returned, there is probably more contact now among social groups and more awareness of the dangers of stress, overconsumption and environmental pollution than there was a few years ago.

The characters in the Panduro plays this January were spoiled children who never had to grow up and face themselves, their emotions, and the structure and weaknesses of their society. Today anyone who wants to get a degree or find a job must understand a great deal about himself and the social system in order to realize that his or her lack of "success" is not necessarily the result of personal failings. The great danger is that the Danes will give up all feeling of responsibility and look upon themselves as the pawns of blind economic forces. Such an atmosphere would prepare the way for demagogues even more dangerous than Glistrup.

One ray of hope is that most Danes will do almost anything to make their jobs decent and rewarding. If the Italians are known for devoting themselves primarily to their families, then the Danes are often just as much married to their jobs. They are eager to preserve and to improve their places of work—even if that means taking them over. This is something different from British nationalization or Chinese collectivization. It is Danish peasant cooperation at its best. □

SEMANTICS AND DEVICES

THE REAL FORD STRATEGY

WILLIAM K. TABB

It is fashionable these days to suggest that Gerald Ford and his advisers have not the vaguest clue as to what policies will get us out of the current crisis. It is also beginning to dawn on more and more people that business as usual and a gradual recovery is too costly in terms of the human misery it imposes, and even more disturbingly, may not occur without conscious, thoughtful and even more substantial intervention in the economy.

President Ford, after announcing a hands-off policy of letting market forces work themselves out, of balancing the budget and even imposing a tax surcharge, has been forced by the deteriorating economic situation to reverse himself quite dramatically. The President's December 11, 1974 statement

> If there are any among you who want me to take a 180-degree turn from inflation-fighting to recessionary pump-priming, they will be disappointed.

can be juxtaposed to Ron Nessen's admission less than a month later that the President's new set of economic programs would be seen as a "179-degree" change. The President, a short step ahead of liberal Congressional opposition, was offering an activist program of intervention. Since it was wrong-headed in its conception (it would be inflationary because higher energy costs would outweigh the inadequate tax-cut provisions, and would not stem the tide of rapidly rising unemployment because it would do little to create jobs) and regressive in its implications, the Ford plan was unacceptable to just about everybody. Fiscal conservatives were shocked by the huge deficits the President seemed willing to accept; liberals protested because the program was a sham, so clearly was it inadequate as well as regressive.

Yet lest anyone jump to the conclusion that the do-nothingism of Ford Republicanism can be overcome and serious recovery measures be instituted, it is useful to review the devices by which the Nixon and Ford administrations have over the past seven years prevailed on the American people to accept one long continuous period of economic disaster. What much of the current discussion of economic policy overlooks is that in times of crisis

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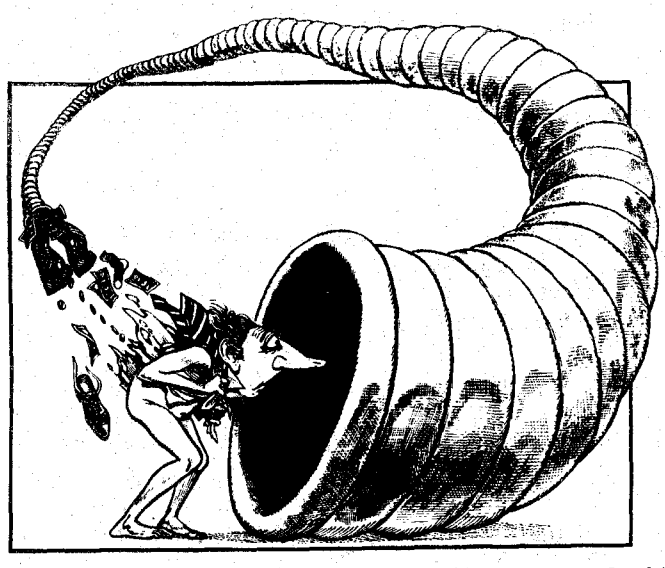
a government undertakes two very different types of economic policy. On the one hand, it tries to change the objective reality (such as slowing down the rate of inflation, perhaps through a more restrictive monetary policy); on the other hand, it tries to change the way people see the crisis (by, for example, denying that the economy is actually in a recession). The second type is as important as the first, especially when the actions being advocated by advisers are incapable of really improving the situation. Such appears to be the case in today's crisis. As it worsens, we may expect an even greater intensification of the war to win the hearts and minds of the American public—even as it is robbed of real income by inflation and rising unemployment.

The two GOP administrations have been incredibly successful in using "redefinition" tactics to pacify the American working people. Before jumping to the conclusion that their game is up we must consider their proven virtuosity with the following devices: the nonexistence theorem, the expert definition, the interim goal, the six-month law of never realized change, the optimal credibility gap, the political statistic and other expedients to be explained as they arise in the discussion. Ford may not be a brilliant man but if he can keep up his offensive by redefining reality he may still be President in 1980. Consider his tactics. First is the use of the *nonexistence theorem,* which states that if you say a problem does not exist, speaking in a tone that betokens absolute confidence and wearing a mantle of high office or expertise, people will believe you, for the moment. Of course, when the "nonexistent problem" is very serious and affects many people, its effect does not last very long. Therefore, the nonexistence theorem requires repetition at proper intervals. Consider how well Nixon did with this form of deception, remembering that in 1967, the year before he took office, unemployment averaged only 3.6 per cent and prices rose a mere 4.2 per cent. (It is a sad commentary that such figures look good today.)

Item: Given the inflation of fall 1969, the Secretary of the Treasury told the Joint Economic Committee, "we" could live with the present 4 per cent unemployment.



Peterson, Vancouver Sun (Canada)

Following criticism of such callous honesty, Ron Zeigler expressed serious concern and sincere unhappiness at the 4 per cent figure, deeming it only a temporary necessity. In January 1971, the President defined full employment to be 3.8 per cent unemployment. Three years later, he claimed that 4.6 per cent unemployment was "normal" full employment. In June 1970, the administration set a goal of 5 per cent unemployment by the end of 1970—a new interim goal.

An *interim goal* is set sufficiently close to the present rate of, say, unemployment or inflation, to appear plausible and yet ambitious enough to be clearly a good step in the right direction. One should not expect that interim goals will be met—when they are, it is a fluke, indicating that the goal had been poorly estimated. Because they are so seldom achieved, they are called "interim goals"—goals that can be withdrawn because you did not take your finger off them.

Remember too that statistics are not only framed by *expert definition* so as to misrepresent unpleasant aspects of reality but that their original conception is often no more than an artful construct, omitting from consideration the basic realities one wishes to define away. A case in point is the concept of full employment within the context of a capitalist economy. It is best if, in the natural course of events, there be many more workers than jobs. This keeps labor from getting uppity and helps maintain divisiveness within the class based on such superficial factors as age, sex, religion and race. Therefore, full employment evidently must not be defined at, say, 99 per cent (to allow for frictional unemployment caused by new job-market entrants and people changing work) but must be set at 97, 96 or 95 per cent. These percentages can be made palatable by suggesting that much of the unemployment is hard core: i.e., people who have been denied education and training, and are therefore not readily employable—unless there is a war, in which case they are quickly absorbed. Most, it is generally believed, are nonwhite. That is not true, but since racism is so well ingrained and since the unemployed are disproportionately blacks, American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and other victims of the system, people say: "Oh yeah, it's them, not us."

"Them, not us" extends to other groups as well, such as secondary workers—teen-agers, women and the elderly in families where a male head also works. We are told by government experts that these really should not be counted among the unemployed when they are out of work; only primary workers (the male head) "count." The fact that women in large numbers have been forced into the labor market in order to maintain their families' standard of living, that many women want to work and have a right to decent well-paying jobs, that older people continue to work or go back to work out of necessity, as do teen-agers—all this is conveniently denied by the expedient of redefinition. Such people are only "secondary."

Similarly, when the unemployment rate in late 1974 was 6 per cent as defined by the government, another 3 per cent were involuntarily working part-time and seeking full-time work. At least another 3 per cent had become discouraged (had given up looking for work) and were not counted among the unemployed, being defined as

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"not in the labor force." Thus, this definition takes a very serious permanent unemployment problem and defines it down to "something we can live with."

The *political statistic* follows a strict rule: It is statistically significant if it is going our way.

Item: The August 1970 Consumer Price Index rose by "only" 0.2 per cent (compared to 0.6 per cent the previous month). Professor Stein (of the President's Council of Economic Advisers) saw in this statistic "the most solid evidence" that the policies of the Nixon administration were working well.

Item: When unemployment rose by 0.4 per cent in September 1970—to 5.5 per cent—Professor McCracken of the Council of Economic Advisers saw a "statistical aberration." The accompanying September increase in the cost of living was one of those "inevitable wobbles."

Item: In July 1972, the Consumer Price Index rose 1 per cent, but real earnings rose by 0.1 per cent—prompting Professor Stein to characterize the event as "the best combination of economic numbers released on any one day in the decade. . . . I won't say in the Christian era," he added, with the modesty that betokens a value-free social scientist who tells the truth as he sees it.

Item: Third-quarter 1974 economic statistics showed the third straight quarter of real output decline and price increases greater than in the previous two (also inflationary) quarters. Secretary of Commerce Frederick Dent declared that the situation could not be called a recession. The new terms he offered were "a spasm" and "sideways waffling." Real GNP had dropped 2.9 per cent on an annual basis, while prices had increased 11.5 per cent.

Another concept which everyone should learn to recognize is *the six-month recovery pronouncement*. This phenomenon was first discovered during the war in Vietnam. When things looked really bad, high officials proclaimed that we were in the turning phase; that in six months things would be decisively better (also known as "light at the end of the tunnel"). Such pronouncements can be made as often as every three months without most people catching on or reporters at press conferences laughing loudly enough to be audible on radio or TV. The time at which things will be better is always six months—because that is a period short enough to give people some solace from the prediction, yet long enough so that the prediction will have been forgotten when the improvement does not materialize. Also known as the law of the receding six months, this tactic has been crucial in the fight against inflation through press release during both the Nixon and Ford administrations.

This law is made possible by one of two tactics. First, it can be fulfilled by maintaining the *optimal credibility gap*. The naive might think that politicians would always want a zero credibility gap and that the best way to get it would be to tell the truth. But one soon realizes that the objective of politicians' statements is to claim credit for something they did not do, or more likely to shift blame to someone else for what they did do. The idea is to distort and to convey the wrong impression—without actually lying. This involves saying something which will mislead without being literally a lie. Then, if one is challenged, one can deny having actually said it. The dynamic version of this tactic is the optimal credibility gap, i.e., the maximum distortion the public will swallow, presented early and often in a continuous effort to create a mis-impression of truth. And the end of this gap is announced by forthright and candid admission, long after everyone already knows the truth, since the credibility gap has been stretched to the point of diminishing returns.

Item: Consider in this light the lead story on the front page of the November 13, 1974 *New York Times*: "Recession Cited by White House for First Time." The rest of the country had received the news much earlier; the economy had been in decline for a year preceding the Presidential admission. The White House press secretary said only: "It would appear that this month we're moving into a recession." Reporters were quick to ask if there was a connection between the timing of the announcement and the just-completed Congressional elections. No, said Nessen; "figures just coming in," not political considerations, had determined the timing of the disclosure.

This law can also be fulfilled by a second tactic, by declaring a *mirage*—a technique in which appeal is made to expert judgment to deny the existence of an event or phenomenon which others believe they have observed.

Item A: In August 1971, farm prices rose by 2.9 per cent or at an annual rate of increase of more than 30 per cent. Food prices in the previous year had risen by 13.3 per cent.

Item B: On September 8, 1971, Mr. Stein (still chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers), speaking to the American Political Science Association, said: "The food situation is not critical." He went on to denounce housewives who complained of rising food prices. (Note: this is also a good case of *blaming the victim.*) In his words: "The Bureau of Labor Statistics spends $2.5 million a year to calculate the Consumer Price Index. And yet any housewife can stand up and assert that the Index is wrong, and her unsupported recollections and spotty impressions will be accepted as refuting the result of all this thought and effort. I hope I will not be accused of male chauvinism if I accept the finding of the statisticians." (This attempt to disarm those who would characterize his statement as chauvinist is a clear example of "deny it while you do it," and a too clever appeal to expertise.) Before a group like the American Political Science Association, one stands a pretty good chance when using the old "expert" gambit to stonewall.

The light at the end of the tunnel can be employed in an infinite variety of ways by a creative leader. For example, as the economy worsened a few months into the first Nixon administration and it looked as if worse was yet to come, the President said (to a press conference on September 26, 1969): "Anybody who bets on a continuing inflation will lose that bet." He asserted that his "basic policies were beginning to work." At the end of his first year in office, he said inflation would continue to decline (in face of the fact that it had risen during the first year that he was in office). Top-ranking Republican Rep. Gerald Ford, serving his apprenticeship in the art of expanding the *nonexistence theorem*, said on March

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17, 1970: "The problem of inflation has been defeated . . . the danger of any recession is nil." Even then, his potential as a redefiner of reality was clear.

But if you are absolutely forced to do something, begin by first denying you will ever do it. Then say that it would not work if you did do it. Then, when it has been done and if it worked, the credit is obviously yours; if it did not, you had told them so.

Item: In June 1970, President Nixon tells Congress not to "play politics with inflation by passing legislation granting the President stand-by powers to impose wage and price controls. The Congress knows it will not impose controls because they would do more harm than good."

Item: In April 1971, as plans for wage-price controls to be instituted in August were being developed by the White House, the President told the U.S. Chamber of Commerce: "The road to full employment with price stability . . . will be the road of free markets, free competition, free bargaining, free men."

When things get so bad that none of these tactics work, do not lose heart; there is still a way out—the *inverse negative correlate*. Put simply, this feat of logical acrobatics makes the problem into the cure for the problem. Sounds implausible? While to explain *why* in fact it works would take a separate learned academic paper. (You noticed the appeal to expertise? Very good.) An example will show *how* it operates.

Item: In January 1974, Henry Wallick (a Yale economist newly named to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors) states: "Inflation in America tends to be deflationary—that is, when prices rise too rapidly for comfort, most consumers curtail spending and save more, and this retrenchment serves to damp down the fire." Q.E.D. "Inflation . . . tends to be deflationary."

Advanced students attempt "a new morality inverse negative correlate" by placing a positive value on a formerly negative phenomenon.

Item: William Wolman, vice president of Argus Research Corp. and a prominent economic prognosticator, notes the impossibility of slowing inflation to satisfactory levels without experiencing even worse inflation. (Note the inverse negative correlate: inflation is good because it is better.) He says: "The new wisdom for the average American is to emulate Dr. Strangelove: relax and learn to love inflation." Now, it may be objected that this is not a true morality inverse negative correlate because the implicit disclaimer in the obviously absurd context must indicate a tongue-in-cheek formation. But is this in fact the case? I must argue no. We are here moving into the realm of *the shifted context* . . . but perhaps my exposition is going too far into advanced redefinition tactics for a single lesson.

The impatient novice may, at this point, raise the question: Why bother with all this lying and deceit? Would it not be easier to take positive measures to do something about the real world? Would it not also be better? After a few more redefinition tactics, we shall explain why this cannot be done.

We are now ready for a *dynamic running denial*. The trick here is to keep shifting the ground from under your critics. In a period of crisis, real events are continuously destabilizing, a fact that may be useful if you remember what you have learned about *redefinition*, the *statistic*, and the *optimal credibility gap*. A good running denial starts by pretending that something is not really happening (e.g., Stein on the housewives' wrong-headedness; the mirage routine). Then quickly, just as the optimal credibility gap expires, move to candid admission that it did happen but doesn't anymore. This will put your audience off balance. Try the old *game plan is working*: light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel and we're-out-of-the-woods. Now, if necessary, fall back to "O.K., it's happening but you're making it sound far worse than it is; hence you are undermining confidence." That will stop a Presidential front runner of the opposition dead in his/her tracks.

When a politician is boxed into a corner—getting a lot of flack and not finding a scapegoat to blame, and having no policy acceptable to the backers of the politicians on the one hand and the voters on the other—there are still a number of ways out. One is the *no one's to blame if everyone's to blame route*.

Item: John Tower's opening remarks to the Ford summit on the economy: "Mr. President, let me urge at the outset that we do not waste time trying to determine which group or sector is responsible for inflation. All of us are to blame. . . ." (It was the same gambit as "people cause pollution and people can stop it." The universal culprit theory has it that, since we're all to blame, there is no sense in investigating specific culprits like, say, huge industrial plants which dump their waste into the environment.) Similarly with inflation. We are all to blame, so we consumers should spend less. Never mind that we already cannot afford to buy as much as we once did, or now need. Note that by the end of 1974 real wages of nonsupervisory production workers were 8 per cent less than two years earlier and no higher than in 1965. The worker-consumer did not cause inflation.

Reacting to the President's long-awaited post-summit policy speech on the economy, *The Wall Street Journal* said his economic programs "aren't likely to cure the nation's economic ills soon." Referring to Mr. Ford's comment that to fight inflation we would have to bite the bullet, the newspaper suggested that his proposals could more accurately be characterized as "biting the marshmallow." Many citizens responded similarly; some watching the speech on television had cracked up when our Commander in Chief urged that every housewife should "cut the food you waste by 5 per cent," should "drive less," and should "heat less." People felt especially outraged by Ford's assertion that he did not want to play politics with economic policy.

The real mistake people make in evaluating the Ford economic plan is that they do not see that the plan is *to do nothing*. It is not the absence of a plan; that *is* the plan. In this economic crisis, the government is allowing, indeed encouraging, the recession in the hope that layoffs will discipline wage demands, unemployment will limit consumption and companies will then have to discontinue rapid price increases. By 1976, in time for the election, the economy (the Administration hopes) will be on the road to recovery, with larger firms having bought up smaller bankrupt ones and hired the unemployed at "rea-

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sonable" wages, and with the economy expanding. In the meantime, Ford does not want too much done for the victims of the crisis; that would impede the effectiveness of his game plan. Is there any question about why, with a program like this, the Nixon-Ford governments have had to redefine reality? How could they do anything else? Now, with increased political opposition both within Congress and in the streets (witness New York construction workers closing down traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge during a demonstration for jobs at City Hall, or the unemployed auto workers marching on Washington), Ford talks of fighting recession with a tax cut. But these proposals too are regressive and will do little to get us out of the economic crisis.

There are some real problems for any Establishment politician who might, for whatever reason, be drawn to the unlikely temptation of telling the truth and trying to implement programs with the serious intent of getting us out of this mess. First, he would have to admit that crises are a normal part of the way capitalism works. Income and investment cannot be managed as Keynesians would like. While it is a simple matter to pump up the economy with credit, the situation easily becomes like that of a junkie, whose needs only increase. A downturn can be sustained only if some groups can be cowed into playing the victim. Just as an oversupply of money fuels inflations, so capitalism produces other imbalances: between sectors, with some producing too much and some too little; between consumption and production, as the maldistribution of income places limits on what can be sold. Advertising and sales pressure (packaging, easy credit, planned obsolescence) enforce a contrived scarcity on the society, even as real scarcity exists for those without effective demand (desire backed by purchasing power). Government policies designed to increase private profits created the preconditions for other imbalances, for the energy crises and the food crises. These policies were clearly irrational from the viewpoint of real societal needs. Rather than talking of national unity, then, the honest politician would, God forbid, have to talk about class struggle; about how capitalists are not benign but are engaged in a constant duel with other capitalists for markets, and with workers in an effort to cut costs of production through speed-ups and work reorganization. He or she would have to say that under capitalism only the strong survive, that there can be no disinterested generosity on the part of capitalists; that apple-pie solutions—antitrust or tax reforms—are a sham and a sop; that the economic system controls the political; and that only a unified, angry, class-conscious people's movement can effect change. Where is the politician who will say such things?

While some of the remarks mentioned above may appear to be flippant, they are also, sadly, serious. The tactic of cover-up disguises the real purpose of current economic policy, which is to place the burden of the crisis on the working people of the country and to use every deceitful trick discussed here, and many more besides, to convince the people of their responsibility for the crisis. Rather than studying these tricks one by one, if we can learn to think in class terms, we will be able to expose them. We must continually ask: Which class does a policy benefit? Who is making a statement? Whose interests does he represent? Who are our real friends? How can we unite with them against our real enemies? Once these basic questions are answered, the tricks of the Establishment will begin to lose their hold over us and we will have taken the first necessary step toward solving the economic crisis. □

CARTELS AND SUBSIDIES

THE BYZANTINE SUGAR MARKET

CHRIS WELLES

The Great Sugar Shortage of 1974 is over, but its effect on consumers is not. Though down from record highs of 75¢ to $1, the retail price of sugar is still around 60¢ a pound, four times what it was a little more than a year ago, so the forecast is at best for a very gradual price decline during the rest of 1975, despite continued buyer resistance. In 1974, the average American family of four —both directly and through purchases of other products— paid $140 for sugar, up from $60 in 1973. This year the figure will almost certainly go well above $150.

There has been no lack of explanations for the shortage, but they have dealt mainly with surface events, such as weather conditions. They ignore the tightly controlled, repressive structure of the world sugar market which was at the heart of the shortage and which, if it is not changed, will continue to impose an unnecessary burden on consumers.

The immediate causes of the shortage and subsequent price hike are well enough understood. Since 1971, sugar consumption, especially because of the growing per capita use in developing countries, has exceeded production. Poor weather conditions and other natural causes cut sugar yields during the past growing season, notably in Europe and Russia. Being adroit commodity traders—as the famous wheat sale indicated—the Russians kept their poor harvest a secret and bought quietly in the world sugar market. Some newly affluent Arab sheiks, meanwhile, decided that the sugar market might be a productive outlet for some of their spare petrodollars.

These ingredients were sufficient to incite near-panic buying by sugar users and speculators in the hypersensitive sugar markets, where rumors—spread with alacrity

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by those with large positions—are often more influential than facts. The Arabs and the Russians, for instance, were said to be conspiring to disrupt Western economies by cornering the sugar market.

The buying panic hit its peak in mid-November as the price for "raw" or unrefined sugar in the world market hit 66¢ a pound, up from just 11¢ in early 1974. Raw sugar prices then dropped rapidly to below 40¢, but retail prices remained high as sugar refiners endeavored to recoup the costs of expensive inventories accumulated during the price run-up.

Though forced to buy sugar in the high-priced world markets, sugar refiners profited handsomely from the rapid increase in the value of their raw sugar inventories. But by far the most spectacular profits were made by sugar growers, processors and mills producing sugar from cane grown in Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Hawaii and Puerto Rico; and from beets raised in the colder climates of such Western states as California, Idaho and Colorado. Refined beet sugar is produced by processors from harvested beets in a single operation; refined cane sugar is made from raw sugar produced by cane mills. Both beet growers and processors, cane growers and mills are closely linked contractually and by ownership. The earnings of Great Western United Corp., a once languishing conglomerate which has the good fortune to be the nation's largest beet sugar concern, jumped to $38.1 million in the six months ending last November 30, it having been $1.1 million in the same period a year earlier. This spurred a takeover by two sons of H.L. Hunt, the late Texas oil billionaire, who paid $27.50 a share for a majority of the company's stock which earlier had traded as low as $1.50.

Profit grabbing by sugar producers, as well as acts of God, social trends and speculative buying, all played important roles in the runaway sugar market, but they would never have had such a drastic effect without the convoluted, deeply entrenched and little understood complex of international trade restraints, national protectionism, government regulation and private cartel price-fixing which controls the world sugar business. By its long-standing restraint on the natural workings of the free market, this complex has been enormously costly to consumers even during periods of more moderate prices. Suppressing efficiency, rewarding inefficiency and stimulating waste, it has materially contributed to the inflationary food-cost spiral and forced American consumers over the years to pay billions of dollars in excessive sugar prices.

The complex's single most pernicious component has been the U.S. Sugar Act, a classic example of depression legislation first passed in 1934 and allowed to endure long after the conditions which caused it had disappeared. Designed to protect high-cost domestic producers from the low-priced world sugar market, the Act gave the U.S. Department of Agriculture such extensive control over the sugar industry that the USDA became what Illinois Rep. John B. Anderson called "the equivalent of the board of directors of an all-embracing sugar combine." Under authority of the Act, the department dictated who could produce sugar; how, when, and where they could produce it; how much they could produce, and what price they could get for it.

Shocked by rising sugar prices, the House of Representatives last June refused to extend the Act, and on December 31, to the intense horror of most sugar executives, it expired. Since the thrust of the Act has been to protect the domestic industry from low prices, its demise will have relatively little effect as long as prices remain high. Yet with prices now dropping, however gradually, sugar lobbyists and Congressmen from sugar districts are already making plans to reinstate the Act and thus insure that the industry's present structure is protected from a likely future surge of low-priced imported sugar. The cost to consumers of the 1974 sugar shortage was considerable, but the cost of an ill-advised revival of the old Sugar Act would be far greater in the long run.

The United States is only one of many countries that have sought to avoid free trading in sugar. On the ground that sugar supplies must be assured, almost all developed countries maintain large subsidized domestic sugar industries which are carefully insulated from the world market. (Because most developed nations are in temperate climates, their local industries are usually based on sugar beets.) The result is that nearly three-quarters of the 80 million tons of sugar produced annually is consumed in the country where it is grown. Developed countries obtain most of the remainder of their needs through special preferential agreements with sugar-exporting nations, which are mainly tropical, less developed countries that grow cane. The most prominent of these arrangements have been Britain's pact with Commonwealth producers, Russia's pact with Cuba, and the U.S. Sugar Act, which assigned quotas to about thirty countries to sell to the United States about half its needs, which totaled 11.2 million tons in 1974.

The free world market in sugar is thus extremely small —only about 12 per cent of world production—and it is restricted to raw cane sugar because most countries, including the United States, have protected domestic refiners by banning or restricting imports of refined sugar. In the view of many sugar analysts, this system has several deleterious effects:

(1) It frustrates the principle of comparative advantage. Advocates of free trade argue that each country should produce those goods and services for which it is best suited by climate, raw materials, technology and labor. If this principle were applied to sugar, the bulk of the world's supply would be grown by low-cost sugar cane producers such as Brazil, Mexico and Colombia. As it is, these nations produce far less than they could while most countries, including the United States, rely extensively on protected, inefficient, high-cost domestic industries and preferential agreements whose basis is much more political than economic. The United States, for instance, receives more than a quarter of its imports from the Philippines; the bulk of Russia's imports come from Cuba. Both arrangements entail considerable waste in shipping expense.

(2) It creates a highly volatile free world market. Because it represents such a small portion of the world's sugar, the free world market overreacts to small changes in the balance of supply and demand and is extremely vulnerable to speculative binges. The wholesale raw sugar price on the world market last year soared sixfold. However, despite occasionally sharp price run-ups due to tight

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supplies, the world market is more often a dumping ground for sugar produced in excess of local needs and preferential arrangements. World prices are thus usually artificially depressed. One reason for the insufficient production of the past four years has been the excessively low world price during the surplus years of 1966-68. With sugar selling during that period for as little as 1¼¢ a pound on the free market, even efficient exporters had little incentive to expand their capacity beyond domestic and preferential agreement requirements.

(3) It is inflexible and unresponsive. Volatile world prices would be less a problem if those who regulate sugar production were more expert at anticipating the changing needs of the marketplace. Government bureaucrats, however, are almost never as effective in determining appropriate supply levels as unfettered interaction of buyers and sellers. In a free market such as that in which soybeans, for instance, are traded, industrial sugar users such as soft-drink bottlers, who account for three-quarters of U.S. usage, would anticipate consumption and place their advance orders. Producers then would have sufficient time and incentive to prepare to meet the demand. But when the sugar industry is tightly regulated, users tend simply to sit back and wait to be supplied through official allocation channels. When government allocators overestimate demand, surpluses are dumped in the world market, depressing prices. When they underestimate demand, users are forced into desperate and price-escalating scrambling for supplies in the world market. The consequence has been a repetitive cycle of severe gluts and shortages.

All these deficiencies are particularly apparent in the United States. Government protection of the sugar industry dates back to 1789 when, in one of the first acts by the first Congress, a tariff was imposed on sugar imports. Ever since passage of the Sugar Act, the chief purpose of federal policy in the matter has been, as the USDA put it, "to protect the welfare of the U.S. sugar industry" by keeping the domestic price of sugar sufficiently high to sustain a sizable domestic industry, and by strictly limiting the volume of imported sugar.

To accomplish this goal, the USDA first established a domestic "price objective," which was almost always higher than the free world price and sometimes as much as three times as high. That price, said a House Republican Conference report, was "determined by a politically established formula rather than the free market." To achieve and maintain this artificial price, the USDA restricted sugar supplies to the anticipated demand. By import quota adjustments and orders to domestic growers to increase or reduce production, the USDA could, if necessary, "fine tune" supplies and thus prices on an almost daily basis.

Quotas were valuable property. To foreign producers, they meant access to the artificially high-priced U.S. market. To domestic producers, they meant a guaranteed market for their sugar at an attractive price and an annual average of close to $90 million in government subsidies as an incentive to obey the USDA.

Quota distribution to the always large number of eager foreign supplicants was a rather mysterious process among whose few constants was a lack of interest in efficient, low-cost sugar production. Quotas were handed out by the State Department, which regarded them as a way to reward or punish foreign countries (imports from Cuba, which once supplied a third of U.S. needs, were cut off in 1960 after the Castro revolution), and by members of the House Agriculture Committee, who were often influenced by the pleadings of well-paid lobbyists, often former Congressmen or USDA officials, hired by foreign producers. Among the representatives of twenty-eight countries who appeared before the committee during hearings last February and March were Albert S. Nemir, whose Washington firm of "industrial, economic, foreign trade consultants" receives $198,000 a year to lobby for Brazil's sugar industry, and Thomas H. Boggs, Jr., son of the late House Majority Leader, who is paid $61,000 to lobby for a council whose members include sugar interests in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Specific *quid pro quos* have often been alleged but never proven. Harold D. Cooley, the pugnacious North Carolina Democrat who headed the Agriculture Committee for sixteen years and was known as the nation's "sugar czar," was defeated in 1966 after it came out that the previous year sugar lobbyists and other agricultural interests had given him a $50-a-head birthday party that yielded him $36,000. Following his defeat, Cooley became a sugar lobbyist for Liberia and Thailand.

Allocation of domestic quotas was also distorted. The substantially larger market share given to beet growers as against cane growers in recent years was a direct result not of the cost advantage of beet sugar over cane but of effective lobbying by the beet industry, which extends over a dozen more states than the cane industry. The only major expansion of cane production in recent years was the establishment of a new production area in Texas, home

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state of W.R. Poage, Cooley's successor as committee chairman, and of two other committee members.

Even the ostensible basis for quota allocation—previous quotas and production—had the detrimental effect of favoring entrenched producers and discouraging new ones. An aspiring sugar producer attempting to obtain a new quota or construct a new processing plant usually faced immense thickets of red tape and intense opposition from growers and processors in the same area. Efficiency and new technology thus were only marginally rewarded and inefficiency and obsolete technology only marginally penalized. Arthur Calcagnini, until recently head of the USDA's sugar division, says, "The sugar industry has been existing under a protective umbrella for forty years. Management has become stagnant. They don't look around for new ways to produce and market more efficiently. These things have become lost arts. The producers know they have a guaranteed place in the system and so they just glide along without worrying about somebody taking away their business."

The result is not surprising. According to a recent analysis by D. Gale Johnson, a prominent agricultural economist and chairman of the University of Chicago's Department of Economics, the costs of the United States beet and cane sugar industries were higher than those in any other major sugar-producing country.

As a complement to and, in part, a consequence of government controls, the U.S. sugar industry has evolved into something of a cartel which tends to stifle what limited competition the regulators permit. The extent of concentration and vertical integration is considerable. The few hundred growers who dominate sugar cane and sugar beet production are so tightly linked to an even more concentrated group of processors that competition among different farmers to supply a given processor is negligible. Links between cane sugar mills and refineries are nearly as tight. All Hawaiian sugar cane—which accounts for 10 per cent of U.S. consumption—is grown by a closely affiliated group of plantation owners who send all their cane to a processing cooperative. Virtually all of the raw sugar from the cooperative is delivered to the California and Hawaiian Sugar Co., another co-op which operates a large refinery in Crockett, Calif. Competition between cane and beet producers is inhibited by cross-ownership. Amstar Corp., the nation's largest cane refiner, owns Spreckels, the second largest beet sugar producer.

The most pervasive and alarming suppression of competition is in sugar refining. Some three-quarters of the refining business is controlled by ten giant concerns whose livelihood has rested in large part on a little-known provision of the Sugar Act which banned virtually all imports of refined sugar and thus protected U.S. refiners from foreign competition. (Incredibly, and probably unconstitutionally, the Act also prohibited exports of refined sugar from Hawaii to the mainland.) The effect of this ban on the major world sugar suppliers, many of whom are among the less-developed countries, was to foster what Donald Paarlberg of the USDA calls "a mercantilistic system, the same system we fought against as colonies of Britain 200 years ago. We are saying other countries can grow sugar, but we want to do all the refining. This keeps foreign suppliers as simple producers of raw materials. It relegates them to the status of hewers of wood and drawers of water. It inhibits them from earning foreign exchange and developing industrially."

Within their insulated U.S. market, the major refiners maintain an ingenious cartel little known outside the industry which tends to eliminate price competition. Dr. Russell C. Parker, a food specialist with the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Economics, calls it "one of the classic examples of restraints on competition." Under the system, known as "basis point pricing," the country is divided into eleven pricing areas. In each, the wholesale price for refined sugar sold to industrial sugar users and wholesalers located within the area is more or less decreed by the largest refiner—Amstar on the East Coast—and followed by everyone else. This restrains competition among refiners located in the same pricing area. When a refiner wants to sell sugar to a user in another pricing area, he charges the user the price established in the area where the user is located, plus a predetermined rail freight charge. The shipping charge is not the actual cost of shipping sugar to the user from the refiner. It is a completely fictitious charge based on what it would have cost to ship sugar to the user from the nearest coastal cane refiner in his pricing area. If a Boston refiner sells sugar to a soft-drink bottler in the New York area, he will charge the prevailing New York pricing area price plus freight to the bottler from Amstar's New York refinery. The actual shipping cost from Boston to New York, which is paid by the Boston refiner, has no effect on the price he quotes.

This system may sound complex, but its purpose is simple. It insures that a particular sugar user is quoted the same price by every refiner in the country, no matter whether the refiner is located in Boston, New York or California. During periods of surplus, refiners will engage in limited price competition through the covert granting of allowances or concessions. But economists who have studied the industry say for the most part the cartel is remarkably tight.

Besides suppressing competition, basis point pricing discriminates among users and wholesalers. A Salt Lake City sugar user is charged about $1.50 per 100 pounds freight from California and Hawaiian's refinery in Crockett, the common shipping point for the northwestern part of the country, even though the user may be buying sugar from a Salt Lake City refinery. A candy company in Crockett, meanwhile, which deals with the same Salt Lake City refiner, pays little or no freight. A Chicago bottler who buys from a Chicago refinery must pay a totally ersatz freight charge all the way from Amstar's refinery in New Orleans.

The system is also inefficient. Equalizing prices for refiners no matter where they ship their sugar stimulates considerable unnecessary "cross-hauling" and transportation costs. "Basis point pricing is simply terribly wasteful, wasteful of energy, resources, and money," says an economist who has studied it closely. "And in the end, it's the public who has to pay for it."

Though the sugar refining cartel has been operating for many decades, the Justice Department did not begin looking into it until 1972. Last December, following an eighteen-month investigation, a federal grand jury in San

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Francisco filed criminal indictments against six major refiners, including Great Western United, California and Hawaiian, Holly Sugar and Union Sugar, a division of Consolidated Foods Corp. Among other charges, the defendants were alleged to have used the basis point pricing system "to fix, raise, maintain and stabilize the effective selling price of refined sugar . . . at artificial and non-competitive levels" in the nineteen states which comprise the California-Arizona and Chicago West pricing areas. Refined sugar sales in the two markets in 1972 exceeded $1 billion, of which the defendants accounted for a good deal more than half. Meanwhile, private lawsuits by sugar users against refiners are pending in Seattle and Salt Lake City courts, and in response to requests from Congress, the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission are conducting further investigations into possible anti-competitive actions by the industry, particularly during the recent shortage.

The total cost to consumers and taxpayers of the U.S. sugar program over the years is difficult to determine. Perhaps the most informed estimate was that made by D. Gale Johnson of the University of Chicago in a 1974 study for the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Based mainly on the average long-run excess of artificially high U.S. sugar prices over the expected world market price under free trade conditions, Johnson put the annual cost at between $502 million and $730 million. If, over the longer run, all local protective policies were discarded, high-cost production phased out in favor of low-cost production, cartelistic market controls eliminated, and other unnecessary restraints on the free market abandoned, the annual benefits to American consumers and taxpayers would almost certainly exceed $1 billion.

Despite its costs, the Sugar Act, among the most abstruse pieces of legislation ever passed by Congress, went unchallenged for years. Harold Cooley would introduce periodic extensions of the Act just days before the end of a Congressional session. Pointing out that the Act and its workings were beyond the ken of all but a handful of knowledgeable Congressmen—all from sugar districts—Cooley would ask members to accept "on faith" his contention that the Act "works" and was in the public interest.

When the House Agriculture Committee began considering a five-year extension last spring, however, conditions had changed markedly. With increasingly tight supplies being predicted, domestic sugar prices had jumped to twice the USDA's price objective of 12.7¢ per pound. Designed to deal with surpluses and depressed prices, the Act was proving totally unsuited to periods of shortages and inflation. Though foreign suppliers were eager to import to the United States when the domestic price was higher than the world price, their attitude was changing now that shortages had sent the world price above the U.S. price. Other than to hope that foreign producers would accept less for their sugar in expectation of future surpluses and the return of higher U.S. prices, USDA officials could do little to prevent foreign suppliers from ignoring their U.S. quotas and selling their supplies in the higher-priced world market. Domestic producers, meanwhile, were enjoying record profits while continuing to receive millions of dollars in federal subsidies.

These changed conditions created considerable opposition to a routine extension of the Sugar Act. Eager to promote free market sugar as part of the government's long-standing trade liberalization policy, Agriculture Secretary Earl L. Butz and other USDA officials—especially Sugar Division director Arthur Calcagnini—privately expressed their reservations about the Act. The Agriculture Committee, which is composed almost exclusively of members from farm districts, of course favored an extension. But New York Rep. Peter A. Peyser, an avowed consumerist who had recently battled his way onto the committee, decided to fight against an extension. He mobilized a coalition of Washington consumer groups and House liberals from both parties. Though previously only dimly aware of the Sugar Act, they came to view it as another rip-off of the public by private industry. In a widely noted House floor speech, John Anderson, a respected member and chairman of the influential House Republican Conference, termed the Sugar Act "the very antithesis of the free enterprise system." He called for Congress to "dismantle the U.S. sugar cartel and allow American growers to compete on the open market just like the rest of the agricultural sectors."

Equally important opposition came from industrial sugar users, whose production costs were pushed upward by skyrocketing wholesale refined sugar prices. Led by Coca-Cola executive John M. Mount, the users put together an active lobbying campaign. "We had a tremendous force of local businessmen—bottlers, bakers and many others—letting their Congressmen know how they felt," says Joseph M. Creed, chairman of the Sugar Users Group, a trade organization. To House members, the users' position that a free market was a better solution to high sugar prices than a Sugar Act extension was persuasive. Not only were the users the most sophisticated buyers of sugar in the marketplace but their interests were identical to those of consumers: lower prices. (One group of users supporting the Act was the candy industry; its adroit Washington lobbyist, former Georgia Rep. James E. Mack, had managed to insert into the 1971 extension of the Act a quota limitation on candy imports.)

Still further opposition developed on the House floor from, ironically, sugar growers, who opposed a series of floor amendments tacked onto the bill by labor interests to improve conditions for often impoverished, exploited and unorganized sugar workers. By voting against the bill, the growers hoped—vainly, it turned out—to cause introduction of a new version without the labor amendments.

Agriculture Committee chairman Poage, an autocratic, 75-year-old Texas rancher, might have blunted the opposition by agreeing to compromise with the users, consumerists and labor interests, all of whom probably would have supported a modified bill. But complacently believing the bill would sail through as always, he sent it to the floor with only minor changes. It was a fatal mistake. On June 5, the House voted 209 to 175 to kill the bill.

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The legislation's proponents were stunned. During the Sugar Act's forty-year life, it had spawned a number of lobbyists and other private interests whose principal function was to watch over and influence it. The Act had shaped the most fundamental structures of the sugar industry, nationally and internationally. They could not believe that within a few months the Sugar Act would cease to exist.

Frantic efforts were made to revive the bill. Disgruntled USDA officials whose jobs were linked to administration of the Act and Agriculture Committee aides attempted to gain credence for the view that the Act's impending demise and the USDA's opposition to it somehow had been responsible for rising sugar prices during the summer and fall. In a story headlined: "Sugar: A Sour Story of Mismanagement," *Business Week* quoted an anonymous "House staff figure"—reportedly then Agriculture Committee general counsel John F. O'Neal—as charging the USDA with "one of the grossest cases of government mismanagement I've ever seen—almost malfeasance in office." The USDA position did create some uncertainty, which usually has a bullish effect on commodity trading. But the effect was vastly exaggerated. Sugar prices had already doubled before June 6, a time when Sugar Act supporters were convinced the bill to extend it would pass. "My feeling and the feeling of most people in the futures market," says Earle T. MacHardy, president of the New York Coffee and Sugar Exchange, "is that the defeat of the Sugar Act has not had a significant effect on sugar prices."

The Act's supporters also hinted darkly of a "political scandal, produced by the folks who brought you Watergate," as *Chicago Tribune* Washington columnist Louis M. Kohlmeier felt persuaded to put it. According to this allegation, USDA Sugar Division head, Calcagnini, a 40-year-old former sugar trader, sabotaged the Sugar Act to further the interests of his former employer, Amerop, a subsidiary of France's Sucres et Denrees, a major sugar exporter and importer. Calcagnini, it was asserted, wanted to promote an international cartel, the International Sugar Organization, a now faltering group dominated by sugar exporters, which has attempted to prevent excessively low world prices by restricting output. The chief difficulty with this claim is the absence of an explanation as to just how sugar importers and exporters such as Amerop stood to gain from replacing the Sugar Act by a cartel operated by major producing countries. Asked about the effect of the Sugar Act's expiration on his firm, Ralph Kazi, vice president of Czarnikow-Rionda Co., a large importer, says, "On balance, we don't think it is going to mean very much."

Whatever nonindustry sentiment existed for immediate remedial action dissipated when world prices dropped sharply from their November highs. Sugar interests managed to convince the Administration to announce an import quota for 1975. Though the quota was established on a global instead of a country-by-country basis, the effect of the move was to permit the government at least to retain its import quota authority. Yet efforts to reintroduce an extension of the Act during the final week of Congress failed, and on December 31 the Sugar Act quietly died.

With sugar prices still far above historical levels, there is little immediate likelihood of a major move to revive the Act. Though W.R. Poage was ousted during the January purge of elderly committee chairmen, getting a new Act through the Agriculture Committee would not be difficult. Poage's successor, Thomas S. Foley of Washington, a sugar beet state, is younger and more liberal, but still a Sugar Act supporter. And the committee itself, despite the new liberal House and two new consumer-minded committee members, remains dominated by farm district Congressmen. Yet there is no indication that the group of forces which blocked the extension legislation last June has changed position. And as long as prices remain high and supplies tight, sugar producers feel no need for the Act's protective and price-support provisions.

The producers' current position is only temporary, for over the long run the absence of a Sugar Act will probably have a dramatic effect on the domestic industry. Within a year or two, high prices will likely elicit sufficient additional production, both in the United States and overseas, to bring about a substantial price drop. With imports unrestricted, the bulk of the high-cost, inefficient U.S. industry will gradually be driven out of business. Only a few of the lowest cost sectors such as the Florida cane producers and the beet producers in the Red River Valley in North Dakota and Minnesota will survive. Eventually, imports could account for as much as 80 per cent of U.S. consumption. Though they stand to gain from increased imports of raw cane sugar, even the cane refiners could be undercut by an unrestrained surge of imported refined sugar from new refineries in sugar-exporting countries.

Long before events reach such a convulsive stage, sugar interests can be expected to press energetically for a new Sugar Act. Their argument will likely be based on "national security." Should it become dependent on imports, they will argue, this country would be at the mercy of a foreign sugar OPEC. Indeed, Mexico is already reported to consider organizing an international sugar cartel. "We are going to be treated in sugar just like we're being treated in oil," warns Poage.

The argument is specious. It is true that a major portion of the domestic industry may not survive unrestricted imports, and limited federal aid to ease the industry's readjustment pains may be justified. Yet indefinite subsidization by consumers and taxpayers of every existing inefficient, high-cost cane and beet producer is not, for the possibility that U.S. sugar supplies could be effectively cut off by a sugar cartel is extremely remote. While an OPEC cartel may be effective for a nonrenewable mineral resource the reserves of which are concentrated in one relatively homogeneous part of the world, it would be wholly unworkable for an agricultural commodity that can be and is quite easily, if often expensively, cultivated in most countries of the world.

A sugar OPEC, though, is likely to be only one of the many apocalyptic visions that those whose livelihoods and life styles were rooted in the Sugar Act will advance in their campaign to recapture the days of easy living. In abolishing the Sugar Act, Congress took a bold step to-

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ward bringing to sugar the same free market in which other agricultural commodities, once also subjected to stultifying government control, are now bought and sold. Having abandoned its own sugar program as an object example, the United States is now in a good bargaining position to urge other nations to take similar moves. Over the past year, the prospects for freer sugar trading have brightened considerably. Both the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement and Russia's pact with Cuba, which may soon be permitted to export sugar to the United States, are close to breaking up.

Sugar industry officials, nevertheless, argue that promoting free trade in a commodity still almost totally subject to government controls remains unrealistic. "One nation, even the United States, can't do anything to change it," says Tom O. Murphy, lobbyist for the U.S. Beet Sugar Association and former head of the USDA's sugar division. "I'm as starry-eyed as anyone. But I think we have to realize that we can't conduct our affairs as if we can bring about the millennium all by ourselves."

The death of the Sugar Act will certainly not bring instant miracles. But if the sugar lobby is successful in resuscitating the Act, the outlook will be indefinite perpetuation of a wasteful, costly, retrogressive system which frustrates every benefit free markets are supposed to offer. □

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

A VERY ODD PUBLISHING HOUSE

FRANK WARNER

The U.S. Government Printing Office is the largest publishing house in the world. Every year it prints hundreds of millions of books and pamphlets under thousands of titles. An oddity of this publishing house is that it never admits to putting out a work of fiction, which is not to say that its procedures are based very firmly on facts.

Worst things first: last year the Government Printing Office (GPO) destroyed 2 million pounds of books. That's about 2 million books, worth about $1.2 million, or $720,000 at the normal 40 per cent publisher's discount. But the GPO does not give discounts—not to the average buyer, anyway. The Printing Office would rather destroy its books than sell them to the public at a discount.

When a government agency asks the GPO to print a document, the Superintendent of Documents orders as many additional copies as he thinks can be sold to the public. Then, at six-month intervals, each publication's record is reviewed by GPO inventory management specialists. If they find that a work's demand has significantly declined or that it has become obsolete, they order most or all of the remaining copies destroyed. The books and pamphlets are sold for $30 a ton to paper dealers, who are to take care that the documents never reappear in their original form. Readers and researchers are given no chance to buy the publications at a reduced price.

The strangest thing about this practice is that no one at the Printing Office appears to know why it is done. The people who order the destruction think it stems from an interpretation of the law made by the GPO general counsel an undetermined number of years ago. Associate Counsel Allen Zuckerman guesses that the interpretation was based on a section of the U.S. Code which states, "A discount not to exceed 25 per cent may be allowed to book dealers and quantity purchasers." The law does not say that no one else may be allowed a discount in response to decreased demand, but the logicians at the GPO have decided that that is what it means.

Thomas F. McCormick, the Public Printer of the United States, conceded in an interview that he could, if he wanted, reinterpret the law to permit discount sales but, he said (to unbelieving ears) that it would cost too much to arrange such sales. McCormick noted that, before copies of any publication are destroyed, the agency that originally issued the publication is offered a chance to take the copies back. "We have, in effect, passed the buck."

The consequences of the GPO's failure to act on its own are recorded in files kept by its Documents Control Branch. The records show the dates when documents are received for sale and when they are sold. The new file form also has a column labeled "Stock Reduction." Older forms called this "Number Destroyed," but someone at the Printing Office seems to have found this description offensive. One file form shows that, on March 20, 1969, the Superintendent of Documents received 3,000 copies of *Planning, Regulation and Competition,* an important 1,091-page case study of competition in the auto industry, to be sold for $4.75 a copy. By November 1971, 699 copies of the publication had been sold, and demand was diminishing. At that time, the remaining 2,301 copies were sold for destruction. The GPO allowed itself no alternative.

The same thing happens to copies of public documents by the hundreds of thousands, published every year on every conceivable subject. Public Printer McCormick says he doesn't like to see low-demand documents destroyed. In fact, he claims, "We'd give them away, if we could find someone to take them." But, as one GPO inventory specialist put it, the way things are, "we're going to sell them all or we're going to dump them."

Lacking the discount option, the GPO can expect to increase its sales only through wider publicity. But the Printing Office is doing less than ever to make govern-

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ment publications known. Its only real contact with the public is the monthly booklet, *Selected U.S. Government Documents,* sent to 1.5 million Americans. Not so long ago the booklet went out twice a month, and special flyers were also sent to those on the list. In addition, the Printing Office was establishing lines of communications with magazines and other media, to let them know of new government publications. Today, as part of the GPO's attempt to cut costs, these promotional measures have been dropped. The Public Printer now suggests that each government agency publicize its own publications.

Giving up so many of the open market advantages of discounting and good advertising is questionable enough, but here the GPO follies only begin. In 1968, the Congressional Joint Committee on Printing established the Federal Printing Procurement Program, whereby private printers, who are not especially interested in saving taxpayers' money, each year do more of the GPO's printing.

In 1969, the GPO's own presses handled 57 per cent of its printing jobs. By 1974, thanks to the procurement program, only 39 per cent of Printing Office work was processed on GPO presses. The other 61 per cent of the total 79,000 jobs were contracted out to commercial printers. The program, according to printing procurement manager Gil Young, is founded on "the attitude that government should get out of competition with private industry."

Unintentionally, perhaps, his remark is ironic for the Printing Office was established precisely to avoid the private printers, whose 19th-century passion for profits proved intolerable. President Lincoln wasn't concerned about "creeping socialism" when, less than a month after the GPO opened, Public Printing Superintendent John Defrees told him printing costs had been reduced by 15 per cent. And today the reluctance to pay the rates of commercial printers is so sharp that several federal agencies are adding to their own printing equipment, rather than comply with the Joint Committee's guidelines for increased commercial procurement. Editors of public documents, notably those in executive agencies, dislike sending their publications to the GPO, only to have them farmed out to private printers over whom they have no control. Some of the editors want a new executive printing office established; others simply propose an end to the emphasis on commercial procurement. A recent General Accounting Office report, supporting the latter proposal, estimated that an increase of GPO in-house printing capacity at central plants throughout the nation would save more than a million dollars annually.

It is disturbing but not surprising to find the Government Printing Office the victim of so much nonsense. The entire history of the GPO in its service to the public has been one of mindlessness and legislative patchwork, best illustrated by the way it prices documents sold to the public. Just since 1972, the cost of an average government document has doubled. *Infant Care,* the GPO's all-time bestseller, cost 20¢ in 1972 and for decades before that. Now it goes for $1. A year's subscription to the *Congressional Record* was $18 in 1970; it is now $45. Even the *Constitution of the United States* costs more—150 per cent more than before Watergate (up from 10¢ to 25¢). No government publication sells for less than 25¢.

The increases are not unexplained. The Printing Office has suffered price gouging at the hands of paper suppliers, and severe postage increases. These, in essence, are the reasons given, and, if the GPO were an average publisher, they would be enough to justify the new prices. But the GPO is not that and the explanation is superficial. Congress has never formulated a coherent policy for the sales and distribution of government documents, 96 per cent of which are distributed free. In 1974, only 83 million of the almost 2 billion individual copies printed by the GPO were sold. The rest were either grabbed up by citizens who knew where to get them or used internally by government agencies (or destroyed).

While the GPO sold 83 million copies last year, it also distributed free 52 million copies at the request of Congressmen or executive agencies, and it sent another 10 million free copies to depository libraries. Countless millions (or hundreds of millions) more copies were freely distributed by Congressmen and executive agencies themselves, at their offices and through the mail. Of course, most of the citizens who bought the 83 million copies didn't know that everyone else was getting the same government material free. So how fair is it to ask an uninformed minority to meet rising printing, binding and distribution costs which the rest of America assumes are covered by taxes?

Perhaps all goverment books and pamphlets should be free; perhaps the GPO should make a nominal charge for its publications, while avoiding abuses of their easy availability. Free or extremely inexpensive government documents would not be particularly shocking; the federal government has always paid more than 90 per cent of GPO costs. And the benefits of bringing that figure to 99 per cent can far outweigh the expense.

But the Public Printer seems honestly afraid of making government publications available to too many people. As McCormick sees it, whatever the costs would be, they'd be too much. How would he feel about selling each document at 10 per cent of cost? "It would bother the hell out of me," he says, noting, "The vast majority of our sales are made to people who can afford to pay." The poor don't buy government documents, so presumably they don't want them.

Effecting change for the better at the GPO will require some effort on the part of Congress. For 114 years, it has failed to work out a sound system for making all public documents available to all the public. Right now, members of the Joint Committee on Printing are uninterested. It is hard to get quorums for committee meetings and it never holds public hearings.

If Congressmen can find the time, it might be good for them to consider a prompt reorientation at the Government Printing Office. The needless destruction of documents, the unwise increase of commercial printing procurement, and the inconsistent policies for selling and giving away government publications testify to the need for direction. It is up to the legislators to chart a new course. Meanwhile, the public can ponder the performance of the GPO as a government agency dedicated to the democratic belief in freedom of information. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Lament for a Modest Master

GEORGE WOODCOCK

It was Cyril Connolly's death more than any other which told me that the times of my youth were finally ended: that the Playground—to invert the title of a book he published a quarter of a century ago—was indeed Condemned. Not Auden's death, not even the departure of Julian Huxley and P.G. Wodehouse as if by prearrangement on a single day, so set the bell tolling in my mind, so reminded me that I myself was passing into a stage of life when there were no real elders, and in which, if I did not look sharp, I might find myself trapped in the elder's role as, to his everlasting credit, Connolly never was.

I suppose as a writer Connolly will be rated eventually among the graceful but minor figures of his time—a standing rather like that of Leigh Hunt in the early 19th century or John Addington Symonds at the century's end, competent and agreeable men of letters and (as Wilde noted of such people, including himself) exemplifying the spirit of the age more faithfully, at least at the surface, than their greater or grander contemporaries.

Perhaps indeed it was an extraordinary and very adaptable sense of contemporaneity that made Connolly for so long appear as a literary personification of a time that went through its last splendid agonies—the rainbow of the dying dolphin—in the 1960s, and that began in the ambiguous age between Victoria's death and the First World War when Connolly and Orwell met at "St. Cyprian's," as Orwell called it ("St. Wulfric's" to Connolly), which between them they made the most celebrated of English prep schools, and went on to be contemporaries at Eton. Connolly not only, in Orwell's phrase, "loved the surface of the earth"; unlike Orwell, he remained on the surface, resistant to the depths, and I say this in definition and not in criticism. For if there were no terrible profundities, how splendid were the reflections, of life and literature alike, in almost all he wrote! Connolly was perhaps the man of our time, among those writing in English at least, who most gave one the impression of exemplifying in the fullest yet strictest way Gautier's ideal of "a man for whom the visible world exists."

I was Connolly's younger contemporary and in a small measure his rival, since when he was editing *Horizon* in London I was editing *Now*, and though *Now* was much the more humble journal of the two, there was a certain competition which occasionally had its rewards; on one occasion I had the satisfaction of intercepting Orwell's fine autobiographical essay, "How the Poor Die," and publishing it before Connolly had the chance to consider it. As a rival, I chose not to be among the younger poets who paid regular court at Connolly's Bloomsbury office (in any case I wrote too didactically in those days to suit his taste), though I went—I think three times—to see him when he was supporting the Freedom Defence Committee, a small civil liberties organization in which Orwell and Herbert Read were the leading figures and I was secretary. I remember expecting to meet a poetic golden boy like Spender, who for a while was associated with Connolly in editing *Horizon*, and I was rather surprised at Connolly's dumpy figure, his untidy clothes, his pug-dog face, his look of impudent Irish humor. His conversation was amusing, always more about writers than about books, and he undoubtedly seemed, as his critics have said, something of a snob, at least in matters of literature.

Yet the criticism was only partly just, as one sees in hindsight. Just before Connolly's death, to celebrate his 70th birthday, his most notable early book, *Enemies of Promise* (which first appeared in 1938) was reissued, and at the same time appeared his latest and perhaps his last book, a collection of reviews and essays entitled *The Evening Colonnade*.

I have always treasured, just as I have treasured Orwell's phrase about "prose like a window pane," Connolly's remark, which should stand framed on every journalist's desk: "Articles that cannot be reprinted are not worth writing." It was a rule he kept through the long years when he outlived most of his friends and contemporaries. By the time he died, Orwell and Auden, Day Lewis and MacNeice—all except Spender of the young men whose names seemed so glittering to us as even younger men forty years ago—had departed. Connolly remained until the end, as he had been ever since one had known him, near the center of literary activity in London. Almost until his death, when one had published a book in England, one waited with a slightly tremulous anxiety to see whether Connolly would write of it in the *Observer* or later in the *Sunday Times*, and if he did write of it one could be sure that the book had been understood and its special quality captured unerringly. His praise was cautiously given and to be valued. Glancing back at them, I realize that his reviews of my own books on Orwell and Huxley were the wisest and truest (in the same way as balances are true) that either book ever received. In my experience the only other writer whose reviews stood up to time as well as Connolly's was Vernon Pritchett.

Connolly was a man of extraordinary and multiple talents, but he had a built-in limiting factor which he called "laziness," but which was really a kind of philosophic rejection of excess, even in achievement. He never had the ambition, which dogs so many writers, to fill a shelf with his books. Indeed, he published only a mere handful of volumes; nine I see listed on the flyleaf of *The Evening Colonnade*, which makes ten, and I am sure the list is complete: a book for every four years of a long writing life. Of these, most were collections of short pieces like *The Evening Colonnade*, for Connolly, having written "articles that *can* be reprinted," was economical in the sense that he almost always collected them. And it was not a question merely of "These fragments I have shored against my ruins"; in each volume of his essays, Connolly's fragments made a kind of mosaic that presented a self-consistent view of literature—or perhaps rather the literary life—as a kind of continuum lasting from the Augustans (before whom he rarely ventured) to the present day. His one novel, *The Rock Pool*, and his reflections on man in an unsettled age, *The Unquiet Grave*, were the kind of excellent small books that sold slowly but kept on selling until now they are lesser classics. *The Rock Pool* even survived the rather moralistic condemnation of Connolly's friend, George Orwell.

It was always said by those who knew

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him at Cambridge that a magnificant don was lost when Connolly opted for the life of *homme de lettres* in a villa in cheap between-wars Provence, and there were times when even the *homme de lettres* looked like being lost in the playboy. Yet when World War II began and literary journals were going down like ninepins in London, Connolly started in *Horizon* the best English literary journal since Ford Madox Ford edited *The English Review*. It was not easy then, as I know from my own experience in the 1940s, to get enough of the right kind of material to keep a journal going at a good standard; I found it hard enough with an irregularly published magazine, but Connolly came up with an acceptable issue every month, and never let a well-known writer get away with bad writing just because of his name. It was characteristic of him that he retired from editing *Horizon* after ten years and 120 issues because he believed that was as long as he could maintain his standards of selection at their highest level, and then he closed the magazine down rather than let it fall into less discriminating hands.

Enemies of Promise will perhaps in the end rank as Connolly's most important and most quintessentially characteristic work. There he undertook a curious task: to investigate the necessary features of a book that would still be read in ten years. He not only showed how such a book could be written; he wrote it, and *Enemies of Promise*, with its careful analysis of all the pitfalls and temptations to which writers are prone, became an example as well as an investigation, for it is still being read nearly forty years after it was written. What surprises one again on rereading it is the skill with which Connolly did what every critic would like to do—name the dark-horse winners of his time. How many people were reading Orwell, for instance, in 1938 when Connolly named him a major writer? Two or three thousand, at most, if one can judge from the sales of his books; *Homage to Catalonia*, published in 1938, the same year as *Enemies of Promise*, had sold 900 copies by the time Orwell died in 1950. Now Orwell's readers run into the millions. The last third of *Enemies of Promise* is the most fascinating since it tells of the lost upper-class childhoods of the early century and it describes the backgrounds in which Orwell and Connolly largely grew up together. Though Connolly does not go out of his way to concentrate on Orwell, he shows the roots of Orwell's rebellion and also of his strange conservatism more clearly than any other writer I know.

Connolly's final book, *The Evening Colonnade*, does not make any spectacular departure from his past habits of writing; it is the same kind of loose chronicle of travels and reading over half a decade as its predecessors. But for those who like Connolly's particular kind of reflectiveness, his style in life and writing, more of the same is not to be despised. It is interesting to see how constant he remained in his interests, and yet how he always had something new and curious and illuminating to say about an old subject. One can trace his special loves by noting the authors to which two or more items are devoted. They are, essentially, the dandies, the wits and the perfectionists, Pope and Voltaire, Flaubert and Wilde, James and Proust, Eliot and Pound, Huxley and Cocteau. Standing somewhat to the side, inspired by the loyalties of friendship and experience, are the groups on Orwell and the Spanish Civil War, and, carrying Connolly's sympathy for the defeated into a new area that fascinated him in his later years, there are the four splendid essays on African travel among the great vanishing beasts of a lost past. Provence and Venice are nostalgically looked at, and the book ends in a group of miscellaneous occasional essays that reflect the tastes of a man who, outside writing, was an unashamed dabbler.

More of the same indeed! And on the same level, for Connolly's hand and ear did not slip with oncoming age. The surface texture remains perfect, the irony nimble, and underneath the appearance of tending ever toward that middle way beloved of Greeks and Buddhists, the old passion for the word and its power still glows, to the end. Deliberately unspectacular, in that he never essayed the grand experiments in literary architecture of the men he most admired, like Proust and James, Connolly became and remained a master in the field he chose, his achievements modest but true. □

Politics and the New Britannica

HARVEY EINBINDER

The creation and distribution of a major adult encyclopedia is an international enterprise. Scholarly contributors are recruited from all over the world, and a sales force is organized to market the set in foreign countries where English is used as a vehicle of information and education.

In the past, encyclopedias were identified with particular countries. The famous eleventh edition of the *Britannica* of 1910-11 was the work of British scholarship. The fourteenth edition of 1929 was a product of American and English learning. The new *Britannica 3* employs contributors from many countries, although its inspiration and guiding force is American. The international emphasis is accentuated because more than a third of the sales of adult American encyclopedias are now generated overseas.

The preceding edition of the *Britannica* was a monument to the marketing genius of its principal owner, the late William Benton. He obtained a two-thirds interest in the set in 1943, and successfully transformed an aging, mediocre reference work possessing a famous name into a financial bonanza. He fixed the *Britannica* in the public mind as a symbol of accuracy and authority by means of skillful promotion and aggressive advertising, and convinced middle-class parents that the set was an indispensable educational aid for their children. Thanks to his brilliant salesmanship, Benton realized almost $100 million from an initial investment of $100,000, and provided an additional $45 million in royalties for the University of Chicago.

This financial success occurred despite a host of biased, outmoded and inaccurate entries in the *Encyclopaedia*. These editorial failings were documented in my articles in *Columbia University Forum* in 1960 and in *Encounter* in 1961, and in my book *The Myth of the Britannica* in 1964. The *Britannica*'s publisher ignored these findings and my proposal for a completely new edition. Instead, it continued to promote the old set, which was brought up-to-date by means of piecemeal revision. This process culminated in the 200th anniversary edition of 1968, which was celebrated with an exuberant display of humbug and hullabaloo.

At the same time that this edition was being touted as the last word in scholarship, editorial work was started to create a totally new *Britannica*, the first complete overhaul in its 200-year history. The new *EB*, which appeared in the spring of 1974, contains many innovations. Instead of a single alphabetic arrangement, its thirty volumes consist of two essentially independent encyclopedias. Ten volumes are devoted

Harvey Einbinder, a well-known critic of encyclopedias, is completing a biography of Frank Lloyd Wright.

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to an alphabetic array of short factual entries; nineteen volumes to an alphabetic sequence of long essay-articles; and one volume to a systematic topical outline of the subjects covered in the set.

The new edition is dedicated to Queen Elizabeth II and the President of the United States, who is not named. A year earlier, the *Britannica*'s dedication identified the President as Richard Milhous Nixon. In the new edition, he is not named—a wise precaution, since Mr. Nixon resigned a few months after this dedication appeared.

The new *EB* contains a wide range of geographical and historical articles because it is intended for readers in many countries. Subjects are treated from an international perspective, rather than a narrow American (and British) viewpoint. As a result, the *Encyclopaedia* possesses a broader perspective than works such as *World Book*, designed primarily for American schoolchildren. To accommodate this wider audience, the *EB* frequently employs foreign experts, who sometimes present points of view characteristic of their native countries rather than American scholarship.

Dr. Pangloss is alive and well in the new edition. Foreign countries are portrayed in glowing terms. An insistent optimism that is reminiscent of the *National Geographic* infuses the pages of the *Encyclopaedia*. Positive developments are emphasized; negative factors are slighted. Growth and progress are stressed; inertia and stagnation are minimized. No matter how impoverished a nation may be, hope is held out for a brighter, better future. Even when the facts presented are bleak and forbidding, contributors manage to find something hopeful to say about the future.

A striking instance is the essay on Liberia, which notes that malaria afflicts nearly 100 per cent of the population. It records that dysentery and diarrhea are important causes of infant mortality. Influenza, intestinal worms, sleeping sickness and elephantiasis are also prevalent. Nevertheless, the article asserts, "Living conditions throughout Liberia, while poor, are improving."

Political and social problems are treated cautiously. Controversial topics are covered superficially to avoid antagonizing national prejudices. This is natural because foreign schools and libraries are major overseas prospects for the *Britannica*. The purchasing policies of many of these institutions are controlled by officials who expect their country to be presented in a flattering light. Thus the essay on South Africa, which is an important English-speaking market, employs the term "separate development" in discussing the government's racial policies. The word "apartheid" is not used because South African officials now frown upon this term. (A brief entry on apartheid, however, appears elsewhere in the set.) The essay observes that at the beginning of 1970 more than 800 people were serving sentences under various security laws, but does not describe those laws, which permit authorities to imprison suspects for months without trial. The essay also records that the prison population has risen sharply to more than 90,000 with 750,000 admissions a year, the majority being for violations of the pass laws that define the right of Africans to live and work in "white" areas. The essay, however, does not explain how these laws are used to control the life and movement of the black majority, and to insure the continued supremacy of the white minority.

Distortions and omissions are inevitable when articles are prepared by citizens of authoritarian regimes. The article on Spain disregards the existence of censorship, the secret police, and a large category of political offenses. Instead it claims that Spain has fewer prisoners than any other country in Europe. One section describes the structure of the government without describing the role of Francisco Franco, who has dominated the political life of Spain for nearly forty years. This is hardly an oversight, since the article was prepared jointly by a professor at the University of Madrid and the Secretary General of Tourism of the Spanish Government.

When articles on Communist and Fascist states are written by native authors, they inevitably contain government propaganda. Objectivity is impossible, since articles must follow the party line and portray the regime in power in a favorable light. An example is the *EB*'s rosy survey of Soviet cultural life prepared by the editor of a Moscow publishing house. He offers a glowing description of creative activity under communism, and points with pride to the current five-year plan that will raise the cultural standards of the Russian people. His survey hails the 80,000 book titles published each year in the Soviet Union, and singles out the novels of Sholokhov and Fadeyev as major works of Socialist Realism. But he does not hint at the repressive efforts of the Communist Party and the Soviet State to control the creative output of authors, artists and composers. Characteristically, the editor praises the poetry of Boris Pasternak, but says nothing about *Dr. Zhivago*. His party-line account treats Isaac Babel, Osip Mandelstam and Alexander Solzhenitsyn as nonpersons since it disregards their literary achievements.

Presumably *Britannica* editors commissioned and accepted this apologia by a Soviet bureaucrat, and others like it, in order to secure the cooperation and approval of the Soviet Government in recruiting Russian scholars to prepare articles on other subjects.

Perhaps the spirit of détente explains why the long essay on Soviet legal systems by a Columbia University law professor disguises the crimes committed in the name of law against millions of Russian citizens. The professor fails to cite Article 58 of the Criminal Code, used as a legal instrument by Stalin and the secret police to imprison a generation of victims. The professor disposes of the millions who were condemned and who perished in Soviet labor camps by simply asserting that in punishing "attempts to subvert state authority, the definitions and practice under Stalin exceeded the norms of liberal Western democracies in vagueness and severity of penalties prescribed."

In dealing with backward countries, the *Encyclopaedia* usually does not attempt to convey social and political realities. Instead it supplies a neutral account buttressed with statistics that allow conditions to be inferred, rather than made manifest. In addition, political oppression is often treated in gingerly fashion. Thus the *EB* reports: "Haiti under Duvalier was, in effect, a police state ruled as a dictatorship. . . . The Tontons Macoutes, Duvalier's private police force, became less brutal and arbitrary, because its earlier conduct had disturbed tourists." The article, however, does not portray the fear and terror generated by the Duvalier dictatorship. Similarly, the entry on Paraguay claims, "The future of Paraguayan political life depends on the maintenance of the principles of free enterprise . . . and on free elections." Yet since 1954, Paraguay has been ruled by General Stroessner, who has abrogated constitutional guarantees and employed the secret police and political terror to stamp out opposition to his dictatorial regime.

Occasionally the *Britannica* speaks frankly about foreign tyrants, particularly in articles written by American scholars who are not hobbled by the caution and restrictions that inhibit some foreign contributors. An example is the essay on the history of the Dominican Republic which bluntly states, "The dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo was one of the longest, cruelest, most absolute dictatorships the world has ever known. For over three decades Trujillo ruled his country with an iron hand; virtually everything in the country he touched belonged to him. . . . In 1965 the Domini-

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can Republic exploded in a popularly based and democratic social revolution. Fearing a second Cuba, however, the United States again occupied the country militarily and snuffed out the revolution."

Such outspoken essays are the exception rather than the rule. *Britannica 3* maintains a low profile in dealing with recent history, seeking to serve as a repository for facts and information, rather than ideas and controversy. Thus it devotes only a page to the war in Vietnam, restricting itself to a dry, factual summary in the entry on Vietnam, but does not attempt to analyze the impact of this traumatic conflict on American political life.

Although the treatment of political topics in the new edition is very cautious, many of the taboos of earlier editions have been discarded. Victorian prudery no longer prevents sexual subjects from being discussed freely and frankly. Religious articles are no longer exercises in special pleading. Again and again, the new edition has benefited from its origin as a completely fresh work and from advances in contemporary learning. Although the *EB*'s defective handling of certain political issues is significant, this flaw affects only a small proportion of the set because of the wide range of subjects covered. Therefore, despite such imperfections, the new *Britannica* represents a major advance in encyclopedia construction; its contents and organization are far superior to competing adult works, such as the *Americana* and *Collier's*.

The new *EB* has been published a decade too late for the company to readily recoup its multimillion-dollar investment. Had the new edition appeared in 1964, it would have benefited from rising college enrollments, teen-age population growth and the years of prosperity. Today the company is faced with an unfavorable economic and educational climate. Declining school enrollments, limited library budgets, a falling birth rate, and the prospect of "hard times" make it difficult to market an encyclopedia that costs more than $500. Faced with this forbidding future, executives may be tempted to utilize the hard-sell techniques exploited so profitably in the past.

Aggressive salesmanship rather than editorial innovation has always been the driving force behind reference book publishing. Unlike the publishers of trade books, the content of which largely determines their sale, encyclopedia publishers rely on an army of door-to-door salesmen armed with "special offers" and glib sales pitches to entice parents to sign on the dotted line. Since sales managers are paid according to the number of sets sold in their territory, they have often encouraged salesmen to engage in deception and deceit. The resulting unethical practices have been repeatedly censured by the Federal Trade Commission, and have led to substantial fines levied against major reference book publishers. This record has been documented by *The Nation*, the *National Observer* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Despite this adverse publicity, dubious sales methods are still employed because of their success.

Evidence that fraudulent practices persist in the encyclopedia industry is furnished by the recent ruling of an FTC judge who found that the *Britannica* has been recruiting employees by promising them middle-management training, when they were actually being hired as encyclopedia salesmen. The judge also found that salesmen were entering the homes of consumers under false pretenses by claiming to be conducting a market survey, when they were actually selling the *Britannica*, and by offering fictitious discounts. These deceptive techniques may cast a pall over the genuine achievements of the editors of *Britannica 3*, as executives convert a major new reference work into a commodity to be marketed by means of the high-pressure huckstering endemic in the encyclopedia trade. □

Present Condition of the Arts

THE USE AND ABUSE OF ART. *By Jacques Barzun. Princeton University Press. Bollingen Series XXXV: 22. 150 pp. $6.95.*

BURTON BENDOW

In these six lectures originally given at the National Gallery in Washington, Jacques Barzun calls attention to one of the great casualties of the age. He examines the present condition of the arts, sees no help for it and, since something more than a curt announcement is required, tries to account for it. He is one of the few men to be aware of the gravity of the case and the only one, as far as I know, to attempt a diagnosis.

The trouble began, according to him, when the art of the 19th century usurped prerogatives that did not belong to it. It stole the thunder of a dying God and took on the airs of a full-blown religion. Worse, it turned militant and fought holy wars on two fronts. There was, first, the art that spoke as the conscience of a godless world and denounced iniquities and cried out for reform. Then there was the art that renounced the wicked world and even gave up trying to represent it and resolved to reform itself. The enemy here was the bogus official art that aped the successes of the past and had the support of the academies and the philistines.

Barzun goes on to tell where these two crusades led. They were both defeated—the just society is not here yet and the billboards are still with us—and the defeat only provoked a more intense enmity. Revolutionary art became an assault on our sensibilities, a weapon to jolt us out of our bourgeois complacency. Realists who professed to be leading us to utopia rubbed our noses in squalor. Preachers of peace exposed the horrors of war. Champions of the poor and oppressed took pimps and pushers as their heroes. Liberators of the sexual impulse contrived the most frigid perversions. The result was an art that grew more and more narrow in scope, and more and more violent in its efforts to be shocking. And an audience that grew more and more numb and bored, and either demanded stronger shocks and madder outrages or could bear no more and melted away.

As for the art of the *avant-garde*, it turned on itself and shook off the bad habits of the past with the convulsive starts of a man who gives up smoking. Cults and sects, credos and manifestoes, succeeded one another with bewildering rapidity, each one repudiating the practices of its immediate predecessor and laying claim to a more rarefied abstraction or a more unfettered spontaneity. Every form of art struggled to erase every trace of resemblance to its former self. Poets renounced the use of verse. Painters rejected every shape that the eye might recognize. Writers discarded plot, description and character drawing, and wrote the *anti-roman*. Composers threw away harmony, rhythm, musical notes and the instruments that produced them, and made noise. Even this noise-making followed no predetermined plan but was left to the whim of the performer. The end was suicide—disposable art, the empty canvas labeled white-on-white, the mobile that destroys itself, the sonata that consists of three minutes of silence.

Burton Bendow is a frequent contributor to The Nation.

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No audience and no art, not a soul in the theatre—and yet the show did not fold! It carried on by cutting costs, by performing with the least possible expenditure of energy and even with tongue in cheek, abandoning all pretensions to high purpose or profound meaning and traveling light, aiming at no more than titillation. Art is no longer serious. No one today would dare utter the declaration of faith that Faulkner did some forty years ago: "If a writer has to rob his mother, he will not hesitate; the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' is worth any number of old ladies." Old ladies now are not to be assaulted in any way, but subjected at worst to pinpricks of surprise or to insults that are merely teasing. Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* treats the horrors of war as a wry joke. Claes Oldenburg's "Giant Hamburger," while it makes fun of the museum curators who exhibit it and the ladies who admire it, only does so for their amusement.

This is a much abbreviated and distorted summary of the text. Barzun's full argument is much more convincing, for he has room to explain things more fully, trace the course of events more accurately, furnish hundreds of illustrations and make any number of shrewd comments. He points out, for example, the repetitive character of the whole enterprise. When the work of one generation of artists suffers an eclipse—owing to war, censorship, or some other disaster that interrupts the continuity of cultural life—the next generation returns to the charge in ignorance of what the earlier one did and does the same thing, often with less skill and fervor. Oldenburg in the 1970s only repeats more airily the follies of the Dadaists in the 1920s. This offers a striking parallel to the pattern of political affairs that Arnold Toynbee discerns in declining societies, the pattern of "rally and rout."

Barzun would like to wash his hands of this hopeless case but, to his credit, he cannot. Any egregious symptom—say, an exhibit of twelve empty television screens oscillating in a darkened room—provokes him to denounce modern art *in toto*. He calls it a "destroyer," a "lethal influence" that attacks the vitals of our spiritual life and leads us to "a dance of death." In the last few pages he wishes away not only the art but the age that produced it as well, and foresees a new art created by the men of a new society in the dim future, so that from this imaginary vantage point he may have the satisfaction of looking back on ruins. This vehemence suggests that he, too, was once swept up in the crusade and is now, more than most of us who were never there, disenchanted.

THE BEARING OF HERAKLEION

Heavy from her steady bellying,
the mare comes due.
No retrospect
of ten Kentuckies or the horsefarms
east of Buffalo prepares you
for the silk of that first fur.
You've seen the Easter foals stilting
in toy gallops by their almost
inattentive mothers.
You've known
by watching what the breeding
of Arabia will hone from all
that spindliness: in weeks, the fetlocks
shapelier; in months, the girth below
the withers sinewed like a harp;
in years, the stance and prancing
that will stop a crowd.
But now the colt's nose nudging
for horsemilk nullifies the dream
to come of stallions.
Now
it is enough to know that something
can arrive so perfectly and stand
upright among so many fallen
miracles and, standing, fill
the suddenly all sacred barn
with trumpets and a memory of kings.

Samuel Hazo

Sure enough, when offering his credentials in the opening lecture, he tells how he grew up "in Paris, and not merely in the atmosphere of the new art of the century but in the very midst of its creation . . . surrounded by the young poets, painters, musicians, and sculptors who made Cubism, concrete poetry, atonality, and the rest." It is this kind of art that first captivated him and that still preoccupies him in its decline. I must add at once that he is not engaged in repudiating his juvenile enthusiasms. He has long since outgrown them and speaks with the authority of long experience. His illusions were shattered, or his efforts to say so were encouraged, at a later date.

He glosses over this painful experience when he claims, "my exposure to the arts of the Cubist decade made me see clearly how un-modern, un-contemporary a large part of our artistic output is now." It was the decade after World War II that exposed everyone to disenchantment and to a very virulent strain of it. The war had led only to the cold war; the witch hunt was in full cry; Communists were recanting; actors were confessing their sins to Congressional committees; union leaders were scrutinizing their consciences and their rivals; government officials were purging their departments; and even the splinter groups of the Left were repenting of former errors and expelling die-hards.

At Columbia University where Barzun was established as the leading cultural historian, scholars were busy saving the radical cause by ridding it of all compromising associations—of Marxist materialism and later accretions of dogma, of visionary utopianism, above all, of the revolutionary nihilism that aims only at destruction. I am not referring to a figure like Louis Hacker, who answered Charles Beard's *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* with his *Triumph of American Capitalism* (a 10-pounder ironically called "Hacker's triumph" by students for whom it was required reading). I have in mind the revisionists of the Left, whose views were more or less expressed by Lionel Trilling in *The Liberal Imagination.* These men left their mark on those whom they taught, but not on later generations —witness the student riots of the late 1960s. And this short-lived resurgence of barricade storming can only have confirmed their suspicions of revolutionary ardor and aggravated their sense of the futility of human endeavor.

Starting from very different premises, Barzun shares this distrust of ideology, this distaste for ill-considered passion. That is what makes him so impatient with the arts. He scolds them as if they were young agitators rushing about with half-baked ideas in their heads and bombs in their pockets. He longs for the happy days before they got religion and took to fulminating, the days when they served the purposes of life, when Samuel Johnson could say, "the end of writing is to enable the readers better to enjoy life, or better to endure it." Then, when the arts do lose their animus and become mere diversions, Barzun takes them to task for being trivial and meaningless and complains of "the vacuum of belief."

Or, as a third alternative, he reproves them for not having "had a new idea in fifty years," for continuing to attack the same enemy in the same way. Unfortunately the enemy, except for ominous technological advances, is still the same and is far more tiresome—still out for power and plunder while bleating the praises of free enterprise, still indifferent to things of the spirit unless they can be packaged and sold. No wonder the arts repeat themselves. And they are not as repetitious as Barzun makes out. He mentions only those works that suit his gloomy picture of the current trend and ignores everything else. *Sanctuary* may serve as an illustration of the shock tactics he deplores. But Faulkner's later novels are too Faulknerian, too much a

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part of the writer himself and his view of life as pain, too original to be cited as horrid examples.

Barzun would have put his case better had he avoided blanket anathemas and distinguished between those artists who take up arms for some cause and those in whom belligerence is mere self-assertion or conventional gesture. He might have taken a position above the battle, seen more clearly what all the shouting was about, and written history. As it is, his account of how the arts achieved their present insignificance has the heat and sharpness and salutary emphasis of a good polemic. □

The Telling of the Story

THE UNDERGROUND WOMAN. *By Kay Boyle. Doubleday & Co. 264 pp. $7.95.*

PHILLIP CORWIN

There is a kind of telescopic intimacy to Kay Boyle's work that manages to relate the grand concerns of the world to the personal lives of individual people in a way that is both touching and magnanimous. That has always been Boyle's strength, and it shines through again in her latest novel, *The Underground Woman.*

For about five decades now, Kay Boyle has demonstrated her literary abilities in a variety of forms: novels, poems, essays, children's books, and memoirs. Throughout that period she has consistently been able to be topical without being superficial, to be radical without being irrational and to be humane without being hypocritical. Perhaps that is because to her generation—she was a member of that distinguished literary set in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s that included Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Stein, Joyce and Pound—there was no contradiction between social conscience and artistic expression. In any case, *The Underground Woman* is a further extension of her lover's quarrel with the world. As such, it is a plea for the exercise of political conscience on the part of the middle class.

The protagonist of the novel is Athena Gregory, a widowed, 42-year-old mother of three daughters (Melanie, Sybil and Paula), who teaches a course in Greek mythology at a college in the San Francisco area and participates in peaceful protests against the war in Vietnam. The novel opens with Athena in a paddy wagon, among a group of demonstrators, all of whom have just been arrested for blocking the entrance to a military induction center. A few pages later Athena and the others are sentenced to ten days in the county's Rehabilitation Center, and it is at the women's compound in that center that most of the novel takes place. A brief period following Athena's release from the center, during which her home is invaded by a group of misfits from her daughter Melanie's commune, closes the book.

This is a novel about women and about femininity as much as it is about politics; but it is not a feminist novel, in the tendentious sense, any more than any honest novel could be a propaganda tract. Boyle is too good an artist for that. Indeed, the only avowed feminist among Athena's cell mates is Lou, a harbor pilot's daughter, who is clearly intended to be obnoxious and psychologically disturbed.

This is also, in another way, a novel about a group of freaks walking in the shadows of the epic Greeks, a novel about people freaked out of a society that seems unfit for them; about people who, despite their apparent ineffectuality, try nobly to obey the gods of their consciences, their underground men and women, in order to make their lives more meaningful.

The most consistent set of allusions in the book are to Greek mythology, and actually, they form the framework for the novel. To begin with, there is the matter of names. In addition to Athena, there is a famous folk singer named Callisto and a young woman named Calliope. Callisto emerges as Athena's most trusted friend, and Calliope as an admired companion. There are also repeated references to the Greek myths in Athena's thought and speech. And finally, there is the ever-present specter of intrafamilial strife, the central subject of Greek tragedy.

At a crucial point toward the end of the book Athena tries to tell a friend what significance the Greek myths have for her. She is, at the time, gasping and tearful.

> Mythology transcends the individual. . . . The Greek word, *mythologia*, means more than a simple collection of stories. It also means the . . . the telling of the story. . . . So the narrator . . . and the audience . . . and the whole of humanity . . . they come together as part . . . . . as a part of the echo-awakening process which . . . which is the echoing of history.

In other words, the characters, the struggles, and the issues in this novel are intended to have a transcendency, to be an "echoing of history." And although the characters are undeniably pedestrian, they are meant to be invested with a certain nobility, a stature grander than their conventional lives suggest. Moreover, the person who tells their story, as Athena says in her monologue, is also part of the mythology.

The tension and the movement in this novel derive from various sets of contradictions, both within and outside of the characters. Athena Gregory is a case in point. Named for the goddess of war, she is a fighter for peace. As a woman who once rebelled against her father, she finds herself now the object of a rebellion by her daughter Melanie, who has fled to a commune that is run by a vile fraud named Pete the Redeemer, a kind of Charles Manson. Meanwhile, as a respectable middle-class woman, Athena is constantly hearing the voice of the Underground Woman, who urges her to throw off her restraints, her proprieties, her tendency to remain uninvolved, and to become the opposite of what she is. The Underground Woman is Athena's alter ego, her stifled self.

Once, while lecturing to her students about the myth of Demeter, Athena considers how futile the entire educational system is, how little it has to do with the great problems of the world, and how much she would like to tell her students exactly how she feels. She muses:

> And what if the underground woman at this instant flung aside her disguise? What if she should take my place at this table and say without any show of emotion: "There's really no use in any of us staying here." The underground woman would be the only one with the courage to say this. . . . The underground woman would say: "We have to find some other way." But instead Athena said: "Demeter and her daughter are perhaps closer to our own experience than are the lives of the other goddesses. This is because their grief sets them apart from the immortals.". . .

In *The Underground Woman,* Kay Boyle would have us believe that the grief of the people in her novel sets them apart from those immortal robots who are beyond grief. At times she succeeds and at times she does not. But whatever the final result her effort is a worthy one, and one thoroughly consistent with those of a writer whose energies have always been expended imaginatively and unselfishly in a constant attempt to enlighten her fellow citizens. □

Phillip Corwin is an essayist and novelist.

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I Will Not Cease from Mental Fight

DISCRIMINATIONS: Essays and Afterthoughts 1938-1974. *By Dwight Macdonald. Grossman Publishers. A Division of The Viking Press. 466 pp. $15.*

MICHAEL SRAGOW

Dwight Macdonald is the critic who most gleefully embodies the joy of argument. He has incurred debates in all humanistic fields, running down political inconsistencies with the same zest that he shows in pillorying literary sins. No target is too high or too modest for his gaze; one of the few critics left who takes all society and culture as his province, he is as apt to light into the latter-day yellow press as to knock heads with Nobel Prize winners.

Macdonald's latest collection is the broadest selection yet of his journalistic work. What is most impressive about the book is its sustained intellectual accomplishment and liveliness. Essays written recently have the punch and bite of those written in his critical youth. Since Macdonald's outlook and curiosity have consistently deepened through the years, *Discriminations* is a vital personal history of the changes this century has wrought in American society.

The author's political evolution is well known. After his graduation from Yale (and after quitting the R. H. Macy executive training program) he joined the staff of the fledgling *Fortune* magazine, where he worked from 1929 to 1936. This blacking-factory experience radicalized him: while researching industrial capitalism for Mr. Luce, Macdonald became a Trotskyist. Contemporary history, however, soon convinced the young critic that modern societies were plagued more by their size than by their means of production. He grew disenchanted with fellow Marxists who stifled debate in order to cheerlead for Trotsky. And the actions of the Soviet Union disgusted him as much as the injustices of capitalist nations.

Breaking with the Trotskyists, Macdonald founded his own magazine, *Politics* (published from 1944 to 1949). Throughout World War II he followed an almost unique pacifist line, condemning not only Nazi carnage but Allied opportunism and corruption. Macdonald has espoused anarchism ever since. He feels that people must remake their societies in accordance with a more human scale, so that every individual can feel social purpose and identity. Anarchistic actions would halt the malign growth of technology and industry. They are thus, to Macdonald, the only ones truly "revolutionary" today: they are both "impractical" and "necessary."

Macdonald's cultural beliefs are just as individualistic. He has always defended high art's formal standards, apart from any social considerations. At times, he has even contended that a self-conscious *avant-garde* must be formed to protect the traditions of high art. When Macdonald's collection of "essays on the effects of mass culture," *Against the American Grain*, appeared in 1963, Norman Podhoretz, one of Macdonald's most significant adversaries, praised his "consummate artistry as an essayist," but condemned his social and cultural pessimism and his supposed lack of intellectual flexibility. Podhoretz argued that Macdonald's virtues were primarily stylistic. The essays, said Podhoretz, are examples of "what oft was said but ne'er so well expressed." But those attacks were more justified by Macdonald's occasional sweeping pronouncements and his embattled public life than by the bulk of his critical work. Macdonald's stylistic vitality derives from intellectual alertness; he brings the entire range of his knowledge and experience to bear upon his subjects.

Discriminations demonstrates Macdonald's talent for discussing ideas as well as for being opinionated. It includes, for example, a program for updating the U.S. Constitution that illustrates how his mind works. His anarchist hopes spur him to plan to make the United States more livable—to imbue it with a sense of history and community, to cut down needless and dangerous government apparatus and even to give bureaucrats more human functions. But Macdonald lets neither his hopes nor his pessimism get the better of him—he makes sure he roots his amendments in historical possibility. Throughout *Discriminations*, Macdonald writes like a cross between a dedicated muckraker and an intellectual artisan who aspires to perfection. His famous *New Yorker* essay, "Our Invisible Poor" (a review of Michael Harrington's *The Other America*), is, in its systematic laying-out of statistics and its tone of anger barely held in check, more harrowing than any heart-on-sleeve perorations.

Perhaps most impressive of all are several previously uncollected pieces from *Politics*, including his most direct defense of pacifism:

> If we use the instrumentality of the State and organized warfare, the only way we can prevent massacre and atrocities is to commit them ourselves —first. And justice is done for the innocent not by executing their murderers but by ourselves killing hundreds of thousands of "enemy" innocents. This is a kind of bookkeeping which I don't accept.

In a 1971 afterthought, Macdonald corrected his wording: " 'Prevent' is obviously wrong."

Discriminations also contains several of Macdonald's unmatched critiques of *kitsch* (he takes on Tom Wolfe, Norman Cousins and Marshall McLuhan), an unpublished letter to *The New York Times* about Mary Poppins, and a review of Mailer's *Armies of the Night* that shows off Macdonald's own parodistic gifts.

Of course, Macdonald is not critical perfection incarnate. His allegiance to New York City amounts to provincialism. And his style suffers lapses: his essays are sometimes repetitious—entire anecdotes are repeated—and on occasion his usually clean phrasing breaks down. But these are minor matters. For *Discriminations* has the overarching sweep of its gifted author's career. Macdonald closes the volume with a defense of the 1968 Columbia University SDS that epitomizes his continuing concerns; we are moved as well as edified by these last articles because we know that Macdonald has championed more lost causes than usually fall to the lot of any one man—and still goes on. □

Michael Sragow is a writer living in Boston, Mass.

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

See Liv Ullmann in *A Doll's House* (Vivian Beaumont Theatre). I put it that way with some misgivings, because a staged play is never to be regarded as a one-star show; it must be collectively coherent. In that respect the production at Lincoln Center fails.

The audience today assumes, since *A Doll's House* was written in 1879 and has been produced innumerable times, that it is "old hat": that, for instance, Torvald Helmer is a male chauvinist pig and that Nora is a pioneer of women's lib; or that all males who now see the play are free from Torvald's taint and all females wholly liberated. The play's thesis or "message" is taken for granted, and at present held to be supererogatory.

Quite apart from my conviction that very little of that is true, one should consider Ibsen's view of the play. In a speech

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delivered in 1898, he remarked: "I must decline the honor of being said to have worked for the Women's Rights movement. I am not even very sure what Women's Rights actually are." More important than that, Ibsen asserted at an earlier date that "the play is not a mere realistic drama, but a poem, and . . . its poetry should be emphasized to give it full effect."

This quiet drama has nothing declamatory in it, little of the hortatory or tendentious. It dwells on relationships between individuals, regardless of sex: the true marriage of souls. In most intimate human contact there is a tension, most often unconscious, between the one who is dominated and the one who is dominating—in extreme circumstances, an aggressor and a victim. This happens even when it may be said that love exists between them. What Ibsen asks is how people shall live together in humane responsibility to one another.

More than love is involved. The impediments to a balanced togetherness are numerous: economic factors, social prejudices, religious concepts and habits, community attitudes; all impinge on personal connections. There is also considerable uncertainty as to whether we truly understand or believe in what we accept, because we rarely examine the premises of our customary actions. All these matters very subtly come into play in *A Doll's House.*

Torvald is depicted as a decent, kindly man; he is no household tyrant. He doesn't "stand for" anything. When Nora tells him that it is petty of him to resent his former schoolmate Krogstad, now his business subordinate, Torvald doesn't become furious (as Sam Waterston does in the role); he is simply hurt. He dotes on Nora. He never "bosses" her. When he finds out that she has committed what is technically a crime, he doesn't pounce on her or bellow; he is frightened and shocked.

He is a home-loving, almost uxorious, mildly self-assertive, middle-class husband, neither gross nor stupid. When Nora calms him and explains why she must leave him, he admits that there is "some truth in what you are saying"—and when he adds, "under all the raving exaggeration," he is more or less right. Nora acknowledges that she doesn't know anything about the world she lives in. She wants to learn. Perhaps it is true that she is unfit to educate her children, since she has never been given the opportunity to discover things for herself. She is as bewildered as Torvald and hardly more "sensitive." She is only much more *innocent* or ignorant. The play's drama lies in the progression to an awakening of consciousness—his as well as hers. His last line expresses the possibility that the "miracle of miracles"—"the wonderful" in Christopher Hampton's translation—that Nora has spoken of may occur. It is the hope that, after the crisis and the test of further experience, a healthy union may be established between them. The play, judged in this light, is just as much one of "male liberation" as of its counterpart. It does not seem to have occurred to those who believe Torvald a paltry creature that if this is so, Nora herself becomes a goose and the play itself lame.

The audience at Lincoln Center laughs scornfully at Torvald. This is not only a symptom of its New York, mid-20th-century complacency or phony sophistication but also a sign that Torvald is being played falsely—that is, without proper realization of the play's meaning or mood. And that mood, I must emphasize, for all the play's dramatic force, is reflective and subdued.

I am not blaming Sam Waterston, though I believe him miscast. The production's fault is recognizable in virtually all its major performances—except that of Liv Ullmann. The Norwegian director Tormod Skagestad has clearly aimed at a straightforward, unromantic, no-nonsense interpretation. This, like Santo Loquasto's nicely functional setting, is entirely justifiable. But either because the director is unfamiliar with American actors, or because the company is ill cast, the result in most cases is dry or coarse.

Krogstad is a crushed and deeply embittered man, but he is played here as a vociferously vindictive villain. Mrs. Linde is a disillusioned woman who has grown "sensible" or down-to-earth; still there must also be tenderness in her, which is little evident in Barbara Colby's performance. Dr. Rank needn't be played sentimentally, but there must be an abiding thoughtful sorrow, a mellowness in his pained irony—largely lacking in Michael Granger's interpretation.

The entire production misses the discreet gravity, the contemplativeness, the modest temper and tone of the play's (provincial) environment, in a word, the *poetry* that is peculiarly Ibsen's; without that, the play is indeed "propaganda" now supposedly hackneyed. The cast plays moment to moment for "points," now melodramatically loud, now weakly soft; it fails to communicate a unifying through-line, what some call the characters' "spine."

Liv Ullmann is almost embarrassingly a real person among figureheads. She plays Nora with unadorned simplicity, a touching innocence, a snowdrop purity. Avoiding all strong "effects," she is so much part of the total Ibsen creation that the completeness of her art may easily be missed by those who view acting as display. In the climactic revelation scene she doesn't proclaim a new determination; instead we see her struggling for clarity and a growing into a fullness of being which foreshadows the possible achievement of the "wonderful," the miracle of miracles.

The title of Leslie Lee's play *The First Breeze of Summer* may be indirectly symbolic: it is the author's Off-Broadway debut (Negro Ensemble Company: St. Marks Playhouse). It is a good beginning.

A play of memory—perhaps autobiographical—its most salient statement is not evident until its penultimate scene, which is a defect in composition. But there are several interesting passages on the way to the conclusion.

An old, ailing woman, amidst the small domestic squabbles and festivities of her home, remembers the mishaps of her early years. She cohabited with three men—one of them white—and she became pregnant by each of them. She yielded to them because of a normally passionate nature. She hoped for marriage, but this never came about, though none of her men was "bad." Still, the youngest of her grandchildren, an adolescent boy, is horrified when inadvertently he learns of his grandma's past: that she was never married, and that one of her lovers was white. It confirms in his mind the libel against the blacks that they are shamelessly loose. Her response to his hysteria is that at bottom he feels guilty about his blackness, that unwittingly he has long suffered a sense of racial inferiority. It may be so, but up to the play's final moments we are given no hint of it.

What is best about the play is its truthful picture of a tightly knit black family, courageously hard-working through all the tensions and rifts among its various members. For example, at a prayer session in the house initiated by the grandmother, her children and grandchildren "testify" in frenzied song and movement and praise the Lord. They do this, not so much from conviction but from familial or traditional impulse: it dispels the fumes of malefic thought. We become sure of this when the elder brother of the play's troubled adolescent speaks of the ritual practice as "crap," and chides the boy for having lent himself to it in apparent sincerity to the point of autointoxication.

Other facets of the family's life—for example, the strict authority exercised by grandma's son over his two boys, his moral rectitude and his self-denying business dealings with his white customers—

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ring true. Though the play's construction is dramatically untidy, its texture contains sound ingredients.

It is in general suitably acted and staged, especially by Douglas Turner Ward who directed it, by Moses Gunn as grandma's son and by Charles Brown as the senior grandson. The well-cast Reyno who plays the flawed younger boy is an actor of promising capabilities, but he indicates his intentions too markedly and toward the end resorts to emotional forcing—the faults of a comparative novice.

There is an attractive and charming actress, Lani Gerrie Miyazaki, in Allen Knee's *Santa Anita '42* (Chelsea Theatre: the Brooklyn Academy of Music). The play is notable for treating a situation most of us were culpably ignorant of or indifferent to during World War II: the internment of American-born Japanese in California and other of the Western states. The play has a sympathetic quality but dissipates some of its merit by trying to tell its story through near-Kabuki means with dialogue that often sounds like haiku. □

MUSIC

DAVID HAMILTON

Even before the first note of the Juilliard American Opera Center's most recent production, as the chorus came shambling on through doors in the proscenium arch, all one's recurrent doubts about the educational aspects of this institution were stirred up anew. If the students of the center are not being taught the fundamentals of stage bearing, just what are they being taught? There's an answer to that, and it's pretty depressing: the principals in the production, which was directed by Gian-Carlo Menotti, had mastered (with perhaps commendable awkwardness) all the semaphoric clichés of traditional operatic "acting." And whatever they are taught about singing is—on the basis of the evidence heard—unsound in the extreme; young voices should not emerge as dry or insecure as most of these did.

The opera in question was a matter of some curiosity—the first performance of a revised version of Samuel Barber's *Anthony and Cleopatra*, which in its prior incarnation had opened the new Metropolitan Opera House. In extenuation of that now-storied debacle, some suggested that Franco Zeffirelli's elephants-and-circuses production had overwhelmed the score. However, in the more intimate surroundings at Juilliard, the scenery—this time, restrained and handsome designs by Pasquale Grossi—once again upstaged the music. Barber's very real lyric abilities do not extend to the variety of pace and tension that this drama demands, although doubtless the present compression of the libretto has rendered less debilitating some of his limitations of scale. The score opens bravely, with a brassy fanfare that implies an appropriate scope, but nothing thereafter conveys a comparable amplitude, let alone a structural reach commensurate with the material. The lyrical moments are amiable enough, never stirring; a newly inserted duet for the lovers ("Take, o take those lips away") is unfortunately close to the triteness of Mrs. D'Hardelot's *Because*, and further impedes an already limping sense of forward motion. I kept wondering when something would happen, but the right question was "if," and the answer was "no."

Altogether livelier was the evening that Eve Queler's Opera Orchestra of New York devoted to Verdi's *I Masnadieri*, a work composed for London in 1847 to a muddled libretto that Andrea Maffei extracted from Schiller's *Die Räuber*. Extravagant and absurd the plot may be, but the music is extravagant and compelling—not controlled and organized on a level with Verdi's best work of the time (*Macbeth*) or later, but full of vigor and color, most of it well realized by Ms. Queler, her enthusiastic cast and a capable orchestra. I particularly admired the vocal and dramatic projection of Matteo Manuguerra, who is probably the best Verdi baritone around these days (except that he isn't around enough); Paul Plishka and William Lewis (substituting on three days' notice) also sang strongly, and Giuliana Trombìn (also a substitute, who had, improbably enough, just finished a run of the work in Parma) disclosed an interesting if not consistently disciplined talent.

Ms. Queler followed this up two weeks later with Donizetti's *La Favorita* (properly "La Favorite"—another of those operas composed for Paris and later widely circulated in Italian translation), a gloomy piece of fustian only fitfully brightened by Donizetti's best lyrical manner. The evening's chief value, to my mind, was the reminder that singing in this literature can be at once lyrical and heroic, at least when the tenor is Alfredo Kraus. Whereas *I Masnadieri* had been performed note-complete, in *La Favorita* Ms. Queler observed Mr. Kraus's preference in cuts, and made a few other excisions as well; I won't complain.

Meanwhile, at the Metropolitan, the massive effort of Wagner's *Ring* cycle was underway, complete for the first time in thirteen years. Of the opening opera, *Das Rheingold*, I can say only that it sounded like an effort: woefully undercast (in the third performance, which I heard, only Ragnar Ulfung as Mime and Maureen Forrester as Erda were both audible and worth listening to) and sluggishly led by Sixten Ehrling. A few nights later, *Die Walküre* proved altogether more convincing. It is, of course, more familiar to the orchestra and in any case more self-propelling than *Rheingold*. Janis Martin's warmly spoken, confidently sung Sieglinde, Jon Vickers' powerful Siegmund (now free once again of all the crooning affectations of the Karajan years) and Anna Reynolds' vigorous Fricka were strong points; and Berit Lindholm, after her cruel entrance number, sang Brünnhilde with considerable power and much sympathy. Once warmed up, the orchestra played very well indeed, and that helped carry the performance when Thomas Stewart's hectoring Wotan faltered. Karajan's production has been amended at one offensive point: when Wotan summons the god of fire with his spear, that worthy now materializes gradually (as specifically indicated in the music) rather than as an eye-shaking burst of red flash powder. Perhaps next time around somebody will consult Wagner's stage directions for the battle at the end of Act II. □

AN AUTHOR OF PANTOMIME

What the black
tights and black

slippers tell you,
Sahib, is that

for the present I'm
top banana or anything

I wish to be. I waste
no breath. I ruffle

my hair a bit. Here
is my magic wand,

my pince-nez. I'm
skating along on

thin ice and then,
without apparent

effort, I put one foot
in the grave. I'm

masquerading as death,
Sahib, I'm speaking

to you in your native
tongue.

Gerald Costanzo

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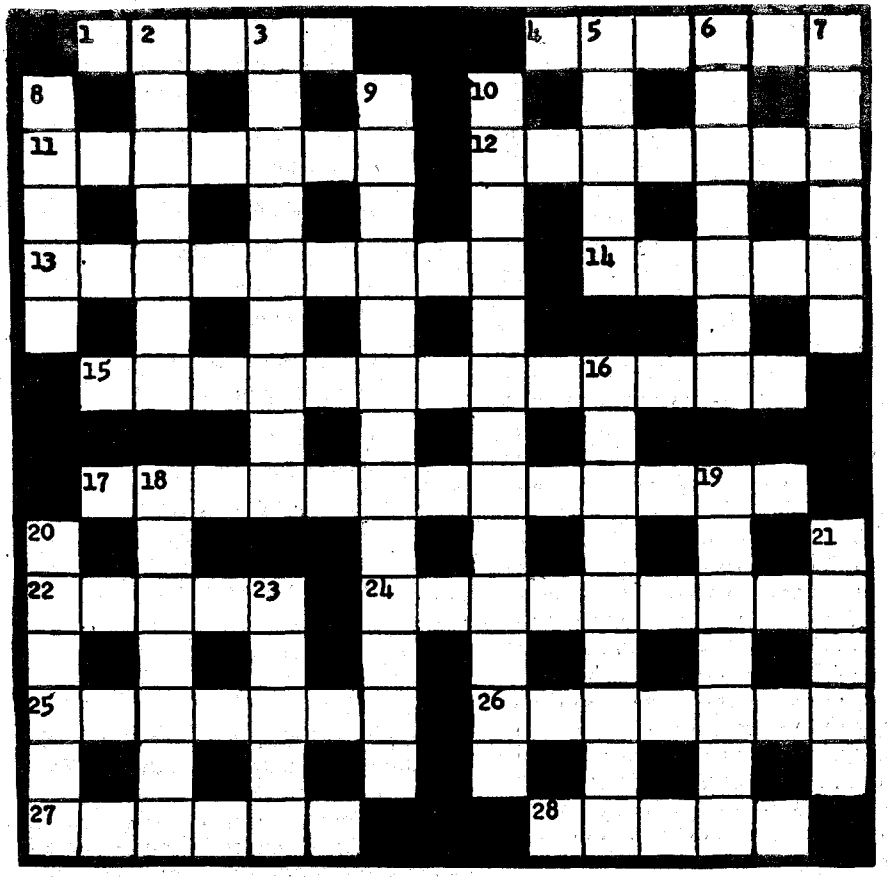
Crossword Puzzle No. 1577

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Formal body, commonly. (5)
4 Expended like an umbrella? (4,2)
11 Adverb enabling a shower of flowers . . . (7)
12 . . . learning flowers might be associated with Little Rock (or Rhinestone). (7)
13 Proving there's a heavenly body in one responsible for *Anacreon*. (9)
14 See 27
15 Alcohol does at times, and takes first place as a sailor occasionally does. . . . (4,2,3,4)
17 . . . as a sailor does, though not in a sparring mood. (3,3,7)
22 One business transaction that should be perfect. (5)
24 The sort one follows with a piano arrangement is African. (9)
25 Chief phrenologist? (7)
26 Gets gradually to the point. (7)
27 and 14 Pool and billiards, among others? (6,5)
28 Lamb specialty to try some time. (5)

DOWN

2 Electric catfish that could be deadly underwater. (7)
3 Those who tip too much, might later. (4,5)
5 Flowers, perhaps with just a little of the season gone. (5)
6 A double proposition. (7)
7 Such a sort is spry, to be precise. (6)
8 People may be put out, if someone does. (5)
9 Found in vases I cover with large vessels, conditionally. (8,5)
10 A double quartet sort of half-nods around it, but it's a tricky performance. (7-2-4)
16 A very old doctor with a lack of tellurium can still make an old medicinal cordial. (9)
18 How not to close a song in a certain kind of theater. (4-3)
19 He took pains, perhaps, to get around Baum's place, but was certainly philosophical. (7)
20 Am ship-wrecked by accident. (6)
21 Hangs improperly, as ferocious teeth might. (5)
23 No place to find a dancer! (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1576

ACROSS: 1 In a state of flux; 8 Indelible ink; 10 Irregulars; 11 Zany; 13 Lethal; 14 Andersen; 16 Xanthine; 17 Crayon; 19 Etui; 20 Transmutes; 22 Caravanserai; 23 Double standard. DOWN: 1 Initial expense; 2 Adders-tongue; 3 Telegraphy; 4 Tabula; 5 Overruns; 6 Fine; 7 Prey on one's mind; 9 Mass hysteria; 12 Perry Mason; 15 Increase; 18 Infant; 21 Barb.

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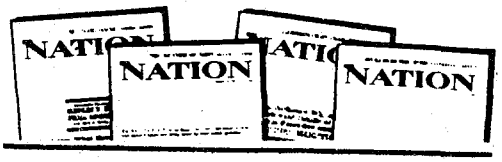

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• **1961** A special issue of The NATION was devoted to "Juggernaut: The Warfare State" by that ace investigative reporter, Fred J. Cook. It warned of the growing military-industrial complex. Many thought we were unpatriotic, paranoid. A decade later, the war in Southeast Asia and the Pentagon Papers proved otherwise. And in that same year, Fred J. Cook filled another special issue of The NATION . . . this time with a probe called "The CIA." He revealed facts that are only coming to light today. A seething nation now demands investigation. NATION readers knew about the CIA all along.

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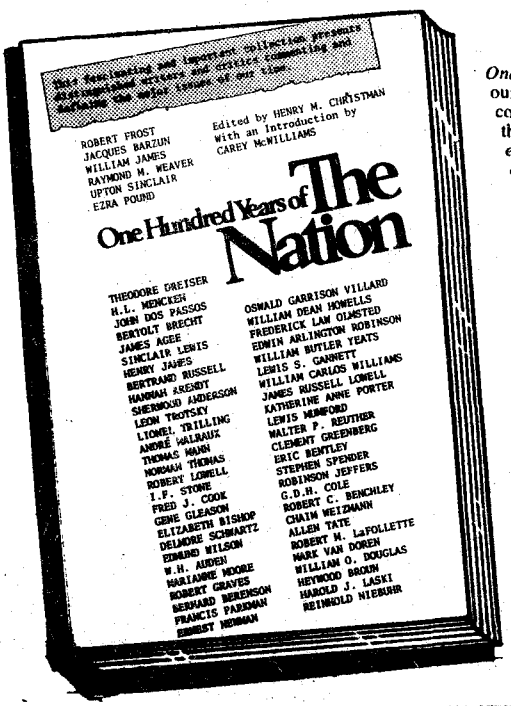

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